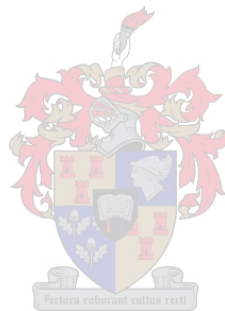


# **A conceptual analysis of the provision of a private school in a Namibian town**

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Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree MEd  
in the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University

Supervisor: Prof B van Wyk

December 2019

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

Signature: .....

Date: .....December 2019.....

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

All thanks to God Almighty through Whom inspiration comes and all is possible.

I humbly recognise the following persons for their valuable and important contributions towards the completion of this thesis:

1. Professor Berte van Wyk for his guidance and support.
2. My lovely wife, Ursula, for her wonderful and endless patience, support and encouragement.
3. Marco and Haiko, our sons, for their loving support and patience with technological advice.
4. My Parents, for teaching me the value of hard work.

I dedicate this thesis to my late brother-in law, Rolf Dieter Gevers (14-01-1963 – 20-01-2019).

## ABSTRACT

This study draws on the work done by Gadamer on hermeneutics. Gadamer's hermeneutics mainly focuses on the understanding and interpretation of text. Using this as a platform for my study, I conducted a conceptual analysis of the provision of a private school in a Namibian town. This was done by analysing policies that influenced the position and development of the private school in its current form. The study of hermeneutics assisted me in developing an acute awareness of where the originator and the receiver of policy documentation stand in relation to the text of the policies.

The town of Oranjemund is going through transformation in becoming a 'normalised' town. All town functions used to be owned and managed by Namdeb, which meant that the Mine not only focused on the mining operations, but also focussed on managing town amenities like the only school, the hospital, town library, town swimming pool and the recreational clubs.

De Beers conducted mining operations along the north-western coast of South Africa for many years. In a similar situation as Oranjemund, as part of an attraction and retention strategy, amongst all the other incentives, schools were built in Kleinsee and Alexander Bay. These private schools were carbon copies of each other. Similar buildings, similar funding and even similar organisational structures. There was also a distant correlation with the De Beers School situated in Botswana.

The schools in Kleinsee and Alexander Bay were handed over to the Ministry of Education in the Northern Cape. The impact on the schools was quite severe and no longer functioned as private schools. The attraction and retention of skilled labour was lost and the mines suffered losses in skilled labour. This while the mines in Kleinsee and Alexander Bay underwent serious reconstruction and changes in management and ownership due to production and economic challenges.

The main aim of my research would be to do a conceptual analysis of the provision of a private school in Oranjemund. The research would indicate whether there is a place for a private school in this community if it depends only on the support of the parents or whether it needs major support from a major sponsor like Namdeb to be sustainable. Further to this study, policy research and the impact it has on society, especially in these remote areas, is something I investigated and described in my findings.

**KEY WORDS:** conceptual analysis, hermeneutics, town transformation, sustainable private school

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie is gebaseer op Gadamer en sy werk oor hermeneutiek. Gadamer se hermeneutiek fokus hoofsaaklik op hoe teks verstaan en geïnterpreteer word. Deur dit te gebruik as 'n basis vir my studie, was ek in staat om a konseptuele analise in die voorsiening van 'n privaatskool in 'n Namibiese dorp te doen. Ek het die beleidsdokumente geanaliseer wat 'n invloed op die posisie en ontwikkeling van die privaatskool in sy huidige vorm gehad het. Die studie van hermeneutiek het my gehelp om my baie bewus te maak van waar die skrywer en die ontvanger van die beleid staan in terme van die interpretasie van teks in die beleid.

Oranjemund as a dorp is besig om 'n transformasie te ondergaan om 'n 'normale' dorp te word. Alle dorpsfunksies was gewoonlik deur Namdeb besit en bestuur, wat beteken het dat die Myn nie net op die myn-operasie gefokus het nie, maar ook moes fokus op die bestuur van die dorp se fasiliteite soos die enigste skool, die hospitaal, dorpsbiblioteek, dorp se swembad en die ontspanningsklubs.

De Beers het vir baie jare mynbou langs die noordwestelike kusgebied van Suid-Afrika beoefen. Net soos in Oranjemund, as deel van 'n aantrekkings- en retensiestrategie, is daar saam met al die ander byvoordele, ook skole gebou in Kleinsee en Alexanderbaai. Hierdie skole was identiese kopieë van mekaar. Dieselfde geboue, dieselfde finansiering en dieselfde organisatoriese strukture. Daar was ook 'n vêrlangse ooreenkoms met die De Beers-skool wat in Botswana geleë is.

Die skole in Kleinsee en Alexanderbaai is aan die Onderwysdepartement van die Noord-Kaapse Regering oorhandig. Die impak op die skole was groot en hulle het nie meer as privaatskole gehandel nie. Die aantrekkings- en retensiekrag vir geskoolde arbeid was verlore en die myne het hierdie werkers verloor. Dit terwyl die myne in Kleinsee en Alexanderbaai besig was met herstrukturering en verandering in bestuur en eienaarskap as gevolg van produksie en ekonomiese uitdagings.

Die hoofdoel van my navorsing is om 'n konseptuele analise te doen op die geldigheid van 'n privaatskool in hierdie gemeenskap van Oranjemund. Die navorsing dui aan of daar plek vir 'n privaatskool sal wees as dit slegs op die ondersteuning van die ouers moet staatmaak en of dit sal staatmaak op die ondersteuning van 'n groot donateur soos Namdeb om volhoubaar te wees. Ek het ook deur my navorsing vasgestel en beskryf watter impak beleidsdokumente op die gemeenskappe, veral in vêr afgeleë gebiede het.

**SLEUTELWOORDE:** konseptuele analise, hermeneutiek, dorp transformasie, volhoubare privaatskool

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## **ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS**

CDM	Consolidated Diamond Mines
ECD	Early Childhood Development – Pre-primary (Year 4,5)
EOI	Expression of Interest
GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
HL	Higher Level
IEB	Independent Examinations Board
LoM	Life of Mine
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEAC	Ministry of Education, Arts & Culture
MUN	Mineworkers Union of Namibia
Namdeb	Namibia & DeBeers partnership
PPP	Public-private partnerships
PTA	Parent-Teacher-Association
SMC	School Management Committee
TTT	Town Transformation Team

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUALISATION OF STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The study entailed a conceptual analysis of the provision of a private school in a Namibian town and the site of the study was in Oranjemund. The study was interpretive and I conducted a hermeneutical inquiry that drew on Gadamer's theory of understanding and interpretation. The aim of the study was to gather a deeper understanding of the context in which town transformation would affect education in this community, especially on the future of the private school.

Namibia has faced and is still facing many challenges since Independence and the diamond-mining sector has been the corner stone of the Namibian economy for many years. The diamond mining company operating for over 80 years in the Sperrgebiet of Namibia has reached a point where the current way of mining and the business model used for decades, need to change. The land-based diamond ore body is becoming more challenging and expensive to mine. Diamonds are a finite resource, but there are some marine and river deposits that need to be extracted to keep the Mine operational.

Prior to the proclamation of Oranjemund, movement into and out of the town was restricted by a permit system. Security clearance was necessary, accompanied by a Police Clearance Certificate to qualify for entrance into the Sperrgebiet. Since the removal of the permit system restricting the movement of citizens and the subsequent proclamation and opening of the town to the general public, the town is facing transformation into a real town.

With the Mine focussing on the production of diamonds, all other town functions need to be normalised and put into the hands of the citizens. This would include normal businesses, government functions, education and health facilities.

The Mine has established a completely new section named the Town Transformation Team (TTT). Employees with various skills and experiences were put together to address this complex issue. The team consists of engineers with mining, town planning and project management experience, a human resources specialist, an environmental specialist with vast exposure to sustainability, a hospital manager and myself as school principal. The TTT soon realised that the transformation of

Oranjemund into a normal town, would take a couple of years to achieve. To be able to pull this off successfully the team needed to strategise very effectively. Three stages were identified and the project has been given 15 years to be completed and they are as follows: Transformation, Transition and Transfer. Figure 1 below illustrates the three stages and it indicates clearly where education is situated in this timeframe.

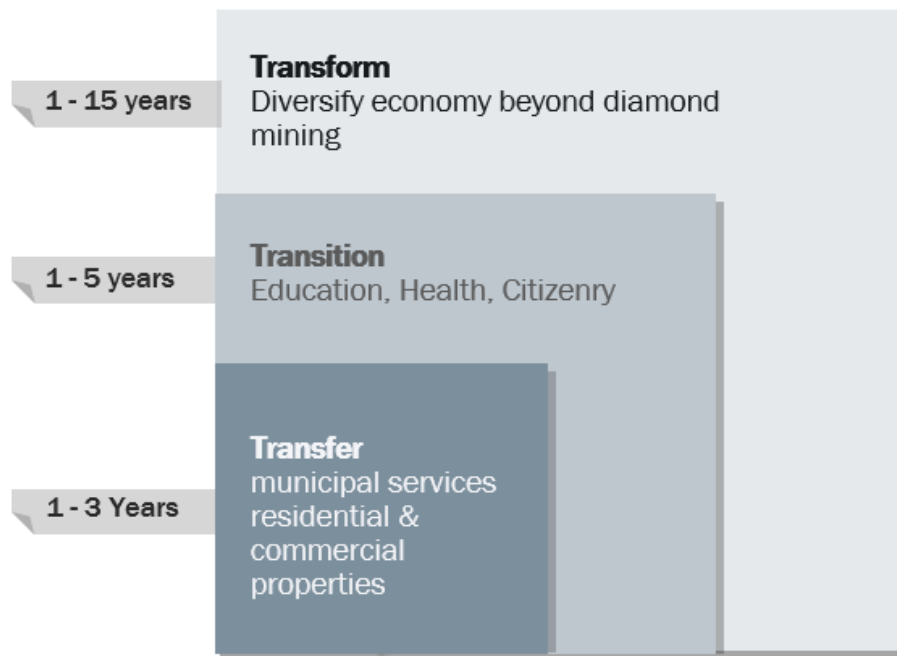


Figure 1: Timeframe & Stages of Town Transformation

As part of the project execution strategy, I was seconded to become the project manager for the Education Project. My focus was on the appointment and management of an education specialist and also to manage the stakeholders and information for the project.

To be able to assist in this regard would not only be a huge honour, but also a massive responsibility to make sure that the focus on the restructuring of the social fibre of this town is done to the best interest of the citizens. For this reason, I was temporarily deployed in the Mine's Main Office Block, while one of the Deputy Principals of the private school was temporarily appointed as Principal of the school.

The organisational structure for the TTT is illustrated in Figure 2 below:

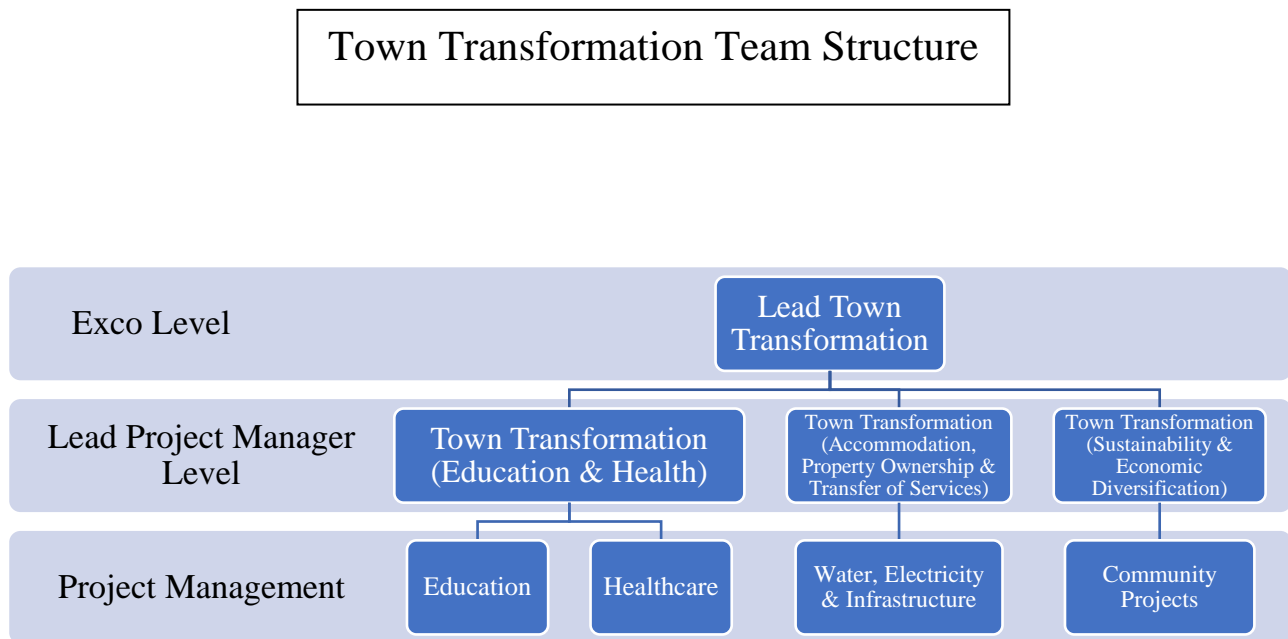


Figure 2: Organisational Structure of the Town Transformation Team

The immediate question arose (with some panic amongst parents): What about the future of the private school?

It was with this in mind that I approached the University of Stellenbosch to assist in providing a framework for a study focussing on the retention or provision of private school education in this town. We are thus grateful that the academic side of our project proved to be very successful with this project. During the drafting of the study proposal, it became clear that the Mine was embarking on a massive social engineering project and that the TTT would need every bit of support to be able to transform this town.

The TTT through the Mine, initiated many engagement sessions with employees and citizens of Oranjemund to gather the necessary data of which the school was part. Consultants were contracted to assist the Mine with formulating an appropriate approach towards town transformation. The town transformation side was seen as very important to succeed and was done by a professional consultancy group called *freedthinkers*. Educational consultants were involved and employed through the *freedthinkers* to assist me in formulating the education solution for the town.

My role was emphasised as being the expert in the town regarding education matters, the history of the school and the related issues regarding the legacy created by the previous Mine managements and how the dependency for living was created around the Mine as the sole provider of education.

As part of self-development I aimed to deliver an academic or ‘scientific’ opinion on a suitable education solution for Oranjemund. My further aim was to do research on educational developments, focussing on the possibility of maintaining a private school facility in a small rural town in Namibia. The research that was undertaken assisted me greatly in advising the TTT about low-cost private schools and how the scenarios identified could play out in delivering an education solution for this town. The study would specifically focus on whether there is space for a private school in a rural town like Oranjemund.

This chapter presents an orientation to my study. Firstly, I present the background to the research and the motivation for the study follows next.

## **1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE PROPOSED STUDY**

After the German administration was overthrown in 1915, South Africa was mandated by the League of Nations to administer South West Africa from 1920 until its independence in 1990 (Rhodie, 1967). Since the Consolidated Diamond Mines (PTY) Ltd (CDM) had the mining licence, the South African government did not recognise the development of education and healthcare facilities as their priority in Oranjemund. CDM developed agricultural farms, healthcare facilities and a primary school to sustain and support their mining operations in this area.

The school originally started in a house with 12 learners as a community school in 1938. The numbers seemed to grow and soon the school moved into its current building in 1952 with 80 learners (Schneider, 2009). Additions and alterations to the buildings were done over the years and the maximum number of learners enrolled at the private school was 959 in 2003. This meant that it was considered as one of the biggest primary schools in Namibia for those years.

Since Namibia’s independence from South Africa in 1990, the Namibian Government got involved with the mining operations at Oranjemund. A 50-50% joint venture between the Namibian Government and De Beers was established, called Namdeb Diamond Corporation (Pty) Ltd. From



the Government's side, they established public functions like the Namibian Police Service, Customs & Excise and Home Affairs in town.

This meant that until fairly recently, Namdeb not only focused on the mining operations, but also on managing town amenities like the only school, the hospital, town library, town swimming pool and all the recreational clubs.

After Oranjemund was proclaimed as a town on 15 August 2013 (Bezuidenhout, 2013), a public school was established in 2014, serving as an alternative free choice for parents for schooling for their children. The public school is accommodated in temporary classrooms and relies heavily on financial and structural support from Namdeb at an additional cost to the Company.

Since proclamation, Oranjemund is going through transformation in becoming a 'normalised' town. Amongst other town functions and services, education in Oranjemund also needs to transform to serve the whole community and not the needs of the Mine only. The current private school is thus also in the process of normalisation and transformation, yet much still needs to be done before it could become a completely independent and self-sustainable entity, if the need exists.

As part of Namdeb and the Anglo Group of Company's efforts to leave a positive legacy post-production, every effort is made to support the transformation of Oranjemund into a self-sustainable community. I argued that a proper study is thus needed to support the recommendations and implementation of a basic education solution for the community.

Namdeb, in its efforts to maintain a positive legacy, is making a huge effort in assisting the newly established Oranjemund Town Council (OTC) in the administration of the town. Namdeb is further assisting with the transformation of the medical and educational services offered in town.

### **1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Oranjemund is a mine-owned town exclusively founded for the accommodation of personnel in support of the diamond mining operations. In addition to providing accommodation, the Mine also had to provide all other services including education and medical services to attract and retain suitably qualified employees. To address education requirements of employees' children, the private school was subsequently started in 1952 (Corbett, 2002). Currently, the private school provides education from Grade 0 to Grade 12 on the main campus, but also addresses early childhood development

(ECD) at the private school's pre-primary section for ages four and five. The Namibian Ministry of Education Arts & Culture (MoEAC) prescribes education in its curriculum from Gr 0 - 12.

Namdeb engaged in studies to make provision for the town to be sustainable and independent from Namdeb mining operations. Since 2007, Namdeb realised that its land-based mining operation would scale down significantly in the future. The main reason being the high costs associated to extract diamonds with the current technology and mining methods. The main focus for diamond production would be on off-shore projects and extracting diamonds along the Orange River. The perceived wisdom is that planning for land-based mine closure should start with exploration (Hoadley, 2007). Namdeb thus started with plans to leave a positive legacy for the town and related amenities to continue independently from its mining operations. The economy of the town would heavily rely on the progress and successes of mining operations and the associated businesses and contractors supporting the mining operations. The hope would be that a positive enabling environment would be created for the economy of the town to grow to be able to sustain healthy developments on economic, social, health and educational sectors.

The recent proclamation of Oranjemund as a town, as well as the increased challenges of the Mine to stay profitable, resulted in a need to reconsider the Mine's role in the town and community. For the town to be sustainable beyond mining, it was realised that the town and all other services would have to be re-engineered to become financially independent from Namdeb.

One of the compounding factors is that Oranjemund lies in the most remote south-western corner of the Sperrgebiet (now called Tsau //kaeb National Park). A further complication is that proclamation of the town took longer than expected and the establishment of a local authority as a fully functional entity poses its own challenges. The community has been used to it that for many years, the Mine paid for and supplied all amenities like water, electricity, housing, schooling and health facilities. To make the community aware that they are going to pay for accommodation, schooling, water and electricity became a huge issue, since this was usually seen as a condition of employment (Property Administrator Manager, 2015a). The newly established local authority, called Oranjemund Town Council (OTC) is facing many challenges of which one would be to convince the community to pay for the delivery of services.

With regards to Oranjemund as a town and mine closure, Namdeb had three choices;

- to raze the town and demolish all infrastructure and evidence of mining activities,
- simply walk away from the town and the mining sites,

- or ensure that the town and remaining mining activities are sustainable post diamond production.

The Namibian Government and Namdeb shareholders have the common belief that the last option would be the best way to go. Due to the dominance of the mining activities in the town's economy, alternative economic activities and revenue streams need to be investigated and developed (Hoadley, 2007). Currently the private school is significantly subsidised by, and reliant on Namdeb.

In 2008 Namdeb engaged with a technical partner to offer advice on sustainable future options for the private school. The recommendation was to establish a Section 21 Company with a board comprising community members as well as Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) and Namdeb representatives. Although the company was established, the school was never transferred to the company. The company is currently dormant. This means that the school is still governed by the Namibian Education Act, but ownership and governance still are with Namdeb. The school falls under the policies and procedures of the Mine, which includes, recruitment, remuneration, code of conduct, performance management, etc.

The private school learner numbers have shown a steady decline from 2006. A steep decline in 2009 was because of the reduction in employee numbers due to the world economic crisis and the subsequent termination of contracts of surplus labour through a process of voluntary separation. The private school never restored its previous learner numbers. The private school systematically incorporated a secondary school from 2009 and the learner numbers gradually increased until 2013. The learner numbers started declining again from 2014 when the government school, was founded. It was later changed to a combined school when the school expanded into junior secondary education (Grade 8 – 10). The public school currently uses some buildings of Namdeb which have been converted to classrooms whilst the GRN has also provided funding and constructed temporary classrooms. Plans to construct permanent structures have been completed but the actual construction has been halted due to financial constraints within the Government. Although the intention is for the public school to eventually offer free education from Grade 0 to Grade 12, a decision still needs to be made by the MoEAC when they would construct a new school building for the public school. The budget was approved for the construction of the school, but the funds need to be released.

## 1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The concept of a private school in Oranjemund has been misleading in the sense that it was not a privately founded, funded and initiated school by parents in the community. The need for a school existed and the Mine had to make provision of such a facility. Parents therefor never really were part of establishing and governing of the school. With the choice offered to parents to enrol their children in a public school where school fees are not compulsory, the private school experienced a decrease in learner numbers. This may lead to the private school becoming even more expensive or might face total closure in the future.

Perhaps at this stage, I think it is wise to explain how the private school operated as a single source of education in this town for many years. I will also attempt to paint a picture to indicate how and why the parents are finding themselves in this situation. Please keep in mind that a major paradigm shift is needed for parents to realise that the Mine will not exist forever and that it will not be in a position to look after their social needs in the future.

### 1.4.1 Effect of Abolishing the Migrant Labour System

Before Namibia's Independence in 1990, Oranjemund as a town was managed by a diamond mining company called CDM. In its efforts to attract and retain skilled labour, CDM had to attend to all the needs of the employees, who lived in this very isolated and extremely remote part of Namibia. CDM had to be very creative in providing medical services, education, retail facilities and suitable accommodation (Property Administrator Manager, 2015a) for its employees.

CDM made use of skilled labour mainly from Europe and South Africa. Soon after Namibia's Independence, Namdeb started focusing on 'Localisation' and the *Namibianisation* of the workforce. Affirmative action was used to replace expats with suitably qualified Namibian employees to manage the Mine. This would mean that Namibian employees qualifying for the same position should receive preference in being employed for the scarce skilled positions (Human Resources Manager - OD, 2014). One of the greatest changes after independence was the involvement of more Namibians in the mining industry. Participation in the mining industry was limited to previously advantaged people (mainly white males) and only a few players, particularly multinational companies which operated in big mining operations in Namibia (Grynberg, 2017).

Since Namibia's Independence, CDM became Namdeb - meaning a 50-50% partnership between the Namibian Government and De Beers. Many of the day-to-day administration of the Mine continued as per normal, but changes slowly started to emerge.

With the inception of the private school in the CDM days in 1952, it mainly catered for the upper bands and the skilled labourers' children. The children started attending the private school from pre-primary up to Grade 7. The parents were assisted with a very handsome subsidy to make it possible for the learners to attend a high school of their choice in Windhoek, Cape Town or the schools in the Boland area of the Western Cape Province. Travel and accommodation were paid for by the Mine. The parents paid the school fees and other additional costs.

A slow, but persistent effort was made to abolish the migrant labour system, which meant that lower band employees stayed longer on the mining site. Prior to this, these employees worked for 6 months on the Mine and returned home for 6 months (Namdeb Foundation, 2013). They would be accommodated in hostels located close to the mining sites during this period.

Most of the lower band employees working on the Mine, stayed in hostels, or if they resided in town, stayed in housing units allocated to single status employees. Namdeb policies were adapted to allow lower band married employees to be accommodated in Namdeb housing. The change in this policy meant that the married men could bring their own children to Oranjemund to attend private school education at very low costs (School Principal, 2013).

Migrant labour patterns indicated that labourers were drawn from the northern regions of Namibia to the //Kharas and Erongo Regions. This was mainly due to the mining operations in these regions. This had implications for the amount of money that was earned that left these mineral rich regions to be spent to support families living elsewhere in Namibia. The demographics of Oranjemund indicate that all 13 regions of Namibia are represented in this community. This created a town with a vast ethnic diversity (Hoadley, 2007).

As part of this exercise abolition of the migrant labour system), the employees staying on the Mine in hostels were transferred to accommodation units in town. The Uubvley Hostel, being one of the bigger and main hostels for the migrant labourers closed and the employees could bring their families to Oranjemund from elsewhere in Namibia, since they were appointed permanently on a continuous base (Sperrgebiet Gazette Namdeb Communications Department, 2005).

The only school was filled with almost 1000 learners – Pre-primary to Grade 7 only. It was soon after this that it was realised that many social challenges were heading this way. With the mothers not being in town and the fathers working shifts on the Mine, this meant that the children were often neglected and not properly fed or well looked after. Homework assistance and proper adult supervision were lacking.

The private school started a school-feeding scheme in a very clandestine manner and discretely distributed food and clothing to children in need. The assistance of the Mine's Social Worker was also being called in to help with the education of the parents in looking after their children. It was an extremely unpleasant situation when small children were found locked up in single accommodation rooms on a Saturday while their father was working on the Mine.

#### **1.4.2 De Beers Schools**

De Beers has been developing communities on their remote mining sites, assisting with the establishment of town, health, education and recreational facilities. For the purpose of this study, schools in these communities are referred to as De Beers schools. They are all built and managed in more or less the same fashion. Namdeb's mining licence stretches over 250 km north from Oranjemund, which includes the town of Lüderitz. Lüderitz is a small "open" town with many other industries sustaining its community. No permits are required to enter this town. It was thus necessary to adapt some of the CDM/Namdeb policies to fit the local situation in Lüderitz; private property could be purchased in Lüderitz and parents had more than one choice of government-funded schools and two small private schools to select from for their children's education. This was not the case in Oranjemund. Employees started pressurising the Namibian government through their political parties to have a government school built in Oranjemund. The main reason for this was that the lower graded employees would prefer the choice of free education provided by the GRN.

De Beers managed mining operations along the north-western coast of South Africa for many years. In a similar situation as Oranjemund, as part of an attraction and retention strategy, amongst all the other incentives, schools were built in Kleinsee and Alexander Bay. These private schools were carbon copies of each other; similar buildings, similar funding and even similar organisational structures. There was also a distant correlation with the De Beers School in Botswana.

The schools in Kleinsee and Alexander Bay were handed to the Ministry of Education in the Northern Cape. The impact on the schools was quite severe and they no longer functioned as private schools. Employees started to leave Alexander Bay and the schools' numbers dropped. It became very difficult to maintain the high standards with teachers leaving subsequently. The mines in Kleinsee and Alexander Bay underwent serious reorganisation, changes in management and ownership during this time. The quality of education was severely compromised and the schools battled to stay functional. As part of Namdeb's strive to develop a positive legacy for Oranjemund as an independent and self-sustainable town beyond mining operations in the future, the future of the private school is carefully considered.

### **1.4.3 The Namibian Government develops Public Education in Oranjemund**

Similarly, and because of political pressure, the GRN is also planning to develop Oranjemund as a fully-fledged town through the local authority (OTC) and the line ministries for Education, Health, Nature Conservation, Mines & Energy and Home Affairs. Oranjemund was proclaimed as a town and we could see the immediate developments taking place in this regard; a State Clinic was opened, the road between Oranjemund and Rosh Pinah was tarred, perhaps one of the biggest developments so far, the opening of a government school in Oranjemund in 2014.

The building and construction of the government school buildings were unfortunately delayed due to financial constraints (Permanent Secretary Namibia Ministry of Education, 2017). The awarding of applicable tenders is still pending and so is the subsequent release of funding for this project. Namdeb provided temporary facilities, but it is not suitable for effective teaching. Housing for government teachers is also another issue, because there is currently a huge shortage of available accommodation in town and the GRN is not addressing the accommodation issue of GRN employees timeously.

### **1.4.4 School facilities**

A well-established private school facility has become too expensive and outlived its original purpose of being the sole provider of education in a very remote area. To normalise the private school and to allow it to still serve the demand for private school education, it needs to be allowed to 'shrink' into its new role in the community. Not all parents are able to pay private school fees and would select the alternative for free education at the public school. This would mean that the learner numbers at the

private school are expected to drop, followed by the staff numbers. A natural trickle of learners from the private school to the public school would see the private school shrinking in size.

The recently established public school has no infra-structure or facilities and is reliant on assistance from the same Mine which is trying to relinquish its responsibility as a provider of education in a remote town. The current economic climate does not favour sustainable expansion of the public school into more Mine-owned buildings. Namdeb is not willing to spend more money on buildings occupied by the GRN. The GRN on the other hand does not spend money on building not belonging to them due to strict financial and procurement processes.

The situation therefor is not conducive for both schools to develop naturally as they should have. The public school cannot expand their classroom space or allow their learner numbers to increase due to the lack of space, facilities and resources. The public school has expanded into old hospital buildings which were converted into classroom space. This includes spaces like an operation theatre, medical laboratory, storerooms and the hospital kitchen. The private school finds itself in a situation where there is ample space, but not enough learners to occupy the available classrooms.

Table 1 below illustrates how the learner numbers decreased at the private school and increased at the public school over the years since 2014.

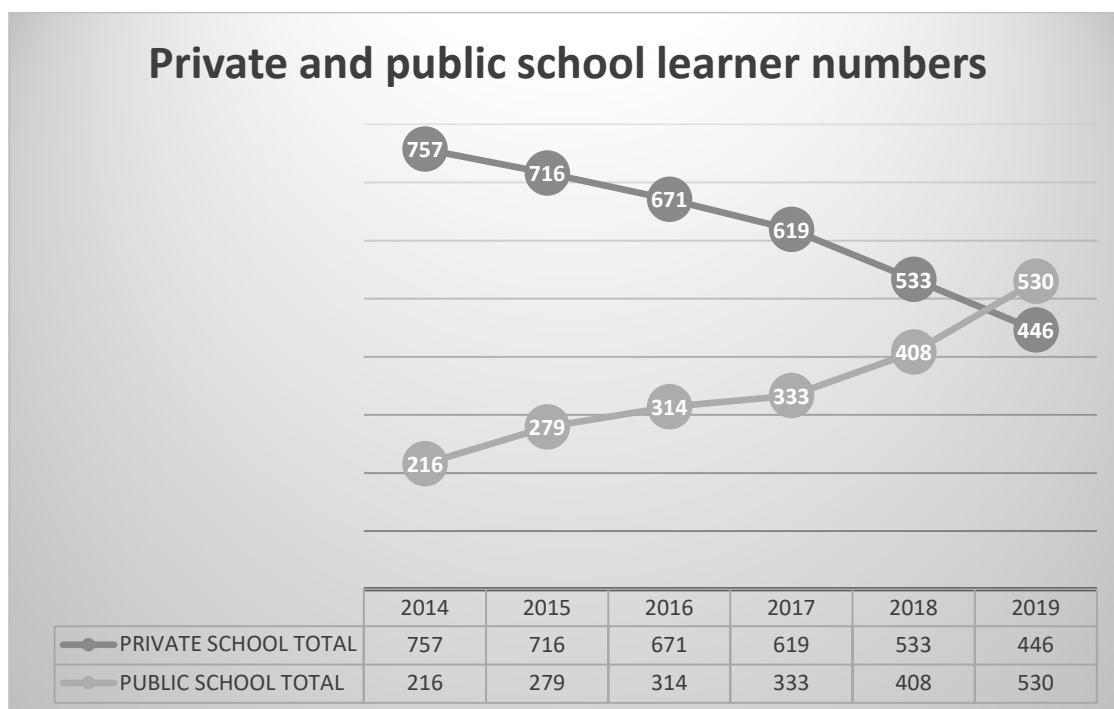


Table 1: Private- and public-school learner numbers



There is a concerted effort to create space for the GRN to expand the public school into some of the available classroom space on the private school campus. This, however, is not a favourable option for both Namdeb and the GRN. It is understandable that a situation like this creates all sorts of issues related to the sharing of buildings, entrances, toilets, intercom system, bells and playgrounds.

If the temporary sharing of classrooms would be utilised as an option, the GRN needs to find funding for the appointment of additional teachers to be able to take the additional classes. This aspect is tied to budgetary and time constraints. This obstacle is not something that could be solved and agreed amongst the major role players within a week or two. From experience, negotiations and the drawing up of agreements involving more than one stakeholder needs time.

#### **1.4.5 Government Finances**

The Namibian Government's vision for 2030 of Eradicating Poverty in Namibia through education set the tone for many policies drafted in this regard. One was the change in the subsidy policy for private schools.

Before October 2014, private schools in Namibia could apply for government assistance in the form of a subsidy to help with the funding of the schools. This mainly meant that the subsidy could be used to assist with the paying of additional teachers' salaries.

After October 2014, The MoEAC changed the criteria for private schools to qualify for Government assistance (Permanent Secretary Namibia Ministry of Education, 2014). Private schools are now required to offer totally free bursaries/scholarships to at least 10% of its learner numbers. In this way, less privileged learners could be offered private school education for free. In general, in bigger cities like Windhoek and bigger towns like Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, it could mean that learners from all over these towns could be selected for these 10% places. The 'cream of the crop' could be harvested and be offered places in private schools for free through the handsome Government subsidy.

During her recent visit to Oranjemund, the Minister of Education, Arts & Culture, the Honourable Ms Katrina Hanse-Himarwa, informed the community of Oranjemund that the building and construction of a government school in Oranjemund has been put on halt. This was certainly not well received. The public school is running out of physical space in their temporary classrooms and has

literally no space in the classrooms for more learners. While the private school is planning its own transformation, and dealing with the lack of funding and support from the GRN, it is facing additional challenges regarding the retention of teachers with the insecure environment Namdeb employees are facing.

Further to this, the GRN announced in April 2017 massive cuts for the 2017 budget and education was not excluded (Permanent Secretary Namibia Ministry of Education, 2017). This could prove to have dire consequences for our efforts to seek an education solution for Oranjemund. This changed the focus of the intention of the MoEAC from providing *quality* education to *access* to education. It is seemingly ignoring the construction of the GRN school, and is asking Namdeb annually for assistance for additional classroom space.

#### **1.4.6 Curriculum Reform**

To further complicate the study, the education sector in Namibia is finding itself in the middle of a Curriculum Reform, which would be implemented up to Grade 11 at the end of 2020. The MoEAC revised the National Curriculum and the implementation started in the Foundation Phases (Gr 0 - 3) in 2015 and is currently being rolled out in the Junior Secondary Phases (Gr 8 - 11). It came with huge financial expenditure in terms of new syllabi, new textbooks, new assessment policies and the training of teachers. The private schools following the Namibian Curriculum encountered huge costs to have this reform implemented and to be ready for every year's roll out.

The major change to the curriculum is that by the end of 2020 grade 11 will be the exit year for secondary school learners. Learners wishing to continue their studies to obtain higher level subject for entrance to selected courses at tertiary institutions, may do so at selected schools offering subjects on higher level. This would mean that the Grade 12 learners will only take 4 higher level subjects of their choice at schools offering these subjects. No Grade 12 ordinary level subjects would be offered.

To achieve this, the MoEAC decided that all learning content must be implemented one grade earlier. For instance, that learning content previously done in all subjects in Gr 9 has now moved down to Grade 8 level. This is why the implementation of the curriculum reform was staggered over a number of years. This way, the implementation was rolled out from junior primary one year at a time. This further allowed for the retraining of teachers to familiarise themselves with the new objectives and learning content.

Another major change with the curriculum reform was the introduction of two more subjects for primary school education. The number of primary school subjects required for evaluation for promotion to the next grade rose from five subjects to seven. This was affected from Grade 5 to Grade 7 and allowed the learners to choose two pre-vocational subjects from four. This would mean that two vocational subjects were added to the primary school subjects to be in line with subject choices in the secondary phase.

There are expected associated costs with offering Gr 12 higher level subjects. Namdeb made it clear to the MoEAC that the Mine is going to focus mainly on its core activity. The implementation of the new Grade 12 higher level subjects would be the responsibility of the MoEAC. A silent assumption that Namdeb would stand in for the costs and that the private school would offer Gr 12 higher level subjects must be avoided. Namdeb, in fact, is trying to relinquish their overall responsibility of being the sole provider of education in the town.

It is worth pointing out major issues associated with the implementation of the curriculum reform as it is currently experienced. There are problems related to each individual region in Namibia, but I will focus on what is experienced in Oranjemund. Basic teaching materials and resources are not delivered to GRN schools. The local public school is experiencing the same problem. Adding to the concept of free education, public schools may not force parents in any way to contribute financially towards the provision of stationery, cleaning materials and other essentials.

Parents from the Oranjemund community are aware of these challenges at the public school. The parents who are able to afford their contribution towards the private school fees, select to enrol their children at the private school. A number of learners returned to the private school. Parents mentioned that the lack of space, overcrowding of classes, lack of teaching materials and stationery, as well as the lack of quality education are the major reasons why parents are still willing to enrol their children at the private school.

Another factor which was not envisaged with the implementation of the curriculum reform in 2015, was how it would affect learners failing their Grade 10 external examination. Learners failing their grades along the way since 2015, simply had to repeat the particular grade. The teachers would put an extra effort in to have the learner ready by the end of the repeated year to be promoted to the next grade. Learners who failed Grade 10 at the end of 2018 were not allowed to repeat Grade 10, since the content of the subject changed completely and was not in line with the new curriculum. This effectively meant that these learners were expected to return to Grade 9 in order for them to catch up

with the work offered in the new curriculum. The associated trauma to these learners can only be imagined, since they already have to repeat the grade, let alone dropping another grade. Settling in with a group of learners two years younger than themselves, would bring its own associated issues and challenges. As mentioned earlier, this is one of the overlooked issues which would need to be carefully addressed with each individual learner.

Coping with the additional subjects and the new learning content was fairly easier in the primary school. Additional classes are offered in the afternoons for the secondary learners to cope with the additional demands of the learning content, portfolio preparation and evaluation standards. Similar strategies are developed for the learners who repeated their grades.

## **1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

The main aims of the study are:

- To conceptually analyse how a private school would be accommodated within a suitable basic education solution for the community which will provide space for private and public education.
- To conduct a documentary analysis of relevant policies in the process of normalisation and transformation of a private and a public school.
- To participate in brain storming sessions, meetings and focus groups to develop a deeper understanding of stakeholder engagement.
- To analyse the data collected to form an understanding of the educational needs of the community.
- To develop a further understanding of the possibility of a private school existing in a rural setting like this community by exploring different options.
- To make recommendations to the project team of Namdeb and the MoEAC about policy changes that would suit similar situations in similar communities.

This study may potentially lead to a deeper understanding of the education solution for a rural town like Oranjemund and might be useful to decision makers and project managers who might embark on similar projects. The De Beers school in Jwaneng, Botswana visited Oranjemund and indicated that they are very interested in the outcomes of this study regarding the private school.

## 1.6 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Below, I am offering a brief chapter outline in order to provide a golden thread through my thought processes:

Chapter 1 explains the reason, motivation and background of the study. The details provided will assist in gaining an understanding of how and why the Mine is finding itself at a crossroads regarding the provision of town amenities and how to relinquish that responsibility.

Chapter 2 deals with the research methodology and research methods of this study. The research methodology of this study is hermeneutics, and I provide a detailed discussion thereof. I also provide reasons why I am interested in this methodology. A discussion of the research methods for this study (conceptual analysis and documentary analysis) is then provided.

Chapter 3 deals with the applicable literature research conducted in formulating my findings and opinions regarding the provisioning of a private school in a small rural setting. Extensive reading was done and very valuable comparisons and similarities offered new insights in this study.

Chapter 4 provides an analysis of relevant policies and how it affected the development of the social issues regarding education in a town like Oranjemund.

Chapter 5 explains how the narratives of the interviews and discussion developed a “hymn sheet” that everyone can follow so that a mutual understanding exists. (More the reason why the study of Gadamer’s hermeneutics was important). A detailed stakeholder engagement plan assisted in developing these narratives so that very view people are excluded, but in the same vein, that the key stakeholders were on the same page all the way.

Chapter 6 deals with the findings and recommendations of the study. I touch on the limitations of the study, and provide my own hermeneutical reflection on the study and a conclusion. I am excited and very pleased that the study revealed the importance of providing a choice to parents regarding the education of their children. It became clear that some policies might have been drafted in isolation and without keeping the needs of the schools and the town in mind. The recommendation on the implementation or amendments to the policies would be welcomed by all stakeholders.

## **1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter has served as an introduction and orientation to the study. The chapter explains how and why the Mine is finding itself at a crossroads regarding the provision of town amenities and how to relinquish that responsibility. It provides a historical view and explains what the future needs are.

The chapter points out the major effects the communities suffer when major sponsors like mines change their operational objectives. It is important for De Beers to leave a positive legacy after withdrawing from communities. Dealing with the adaption and review of policies that need adjustment to assist the transformation of the town, school and hospital is going to be the key of this social-reengineering exercise.

The chapter further describes the limitations and challenges related to resources and financial management. This would provide a key to unlock the potential of a town and community on the brink of a bright, but very different future. How the leaders and the citizens deal with these issues will determine the success of the envisaged town transformation. The chapter mentions the major issues influencing the development of a public school and the redefining of private school education in Oranjemund.

## CHAPTER TWO

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

I have been requested to be part of the Town Transformation Team (TTT) and appointed as Project Manager responsible for seeking an education solution for this community. I soon realised that the research would need academic research to provide authority to the findings and recommendations. I needed to gain insight into the idea of educational research. I would need to look at the question, understand the question, read about the question, describe the question, answer the question and make a recommendation on the question. In other words; I would need to compare the research question through literature review, analyse the policies effecting the local circumstances, understand the impact of the research through the selected research methodology and come up with proposals and recommendations on the way forward with an education solution for this community. In short, I must explain how I am going to do what I wanted to do. I was going to be the expert in my field.

I was inspired by a study previously done by a fellow Namibian, Matildah Kabende (Kabende, 2015) by what she wrote about how she experienced and developed her understanding of the way to conduct her research. She referred to how the BEd Hons course provided her with an understanding of educational research. Her explanation between methodology and methods resonated well with me and I could identify with her question about the difference between the two concepts.

Kabende (2015:25) states that *“I could not differentiate between the two and I was not sure whether methodology referred to a paradigm. Now that I was writing about methodology and method, I encountered Dawson (2009:14), who argues that research methodology is different from research methods. This implies that methodology and method do not have the same meaning. I was left with a question: What then are methodology and method?”*

Kabende (2015:30) further related how Harvey distinguished that *“methodology as the point at which method, theory and epistemology come together in the process of directly investigating specific instances within the social world”*.

The research methodology I selected for this study would be ***Qualitative Research*** through an ***Interpretative Research***. This would filter down and be refined into ***Hermeneutics Research***. The

following **research methods** apply to this study: focus groups, conceptual analysis and a documentary analysis.

I agree with Kabende (2015:25) that an important concept is that this study must not only be for the benefit of the researcher, but it is an exercise in the public domain. The research involves public issues and should be done in such a way that it makes the study acceptable in the public domain. I have been very attentive to issues that are regarded as important and sensitive to the members of the community.

## **2.2 BACKGROUND**

I realised that it is an excellent opportunity doing a proper research of a topic, especially while being deeply involved with a major project like the town transformation of Oranjemund. Being focused on one side of the project seeking an education solution for the community and on the other side establishing the need and viability of a private school as part of the MEd studies, may at times overlap. This overlap between the two must be seen as very necessary and that this must be described as a “twinning” of the two, namely the project and the study. Doing research and generating data for the Mine was made easier by way of working through the project. This provided the base and structure of the study. My direct supervisor on the project described it as planning to build a house.

Explaining the planning of the project and comparing it to the building of a house, every little bit of detail will be fruitless, if the whole construction was not resting on a proper foundation - and the foundation must be designed and built for that specific site. In other words; lots of planning was going into this construction of the house even before the trenches for the foundations were excavated. Proper studies of the slope, gravel, rain, and drainage was to be conducted. Plans were then drawn up to have load-bearing walls where it was needed to support the weight for a double storey or the type of roof construction envisaged for the house. All the finer details cannot be excluded. Timelines need to be established and project milestones were identified.

I see my MEd study as important and can easily compare it with building a house. My study, in a sense, would contribute significantly to the attraction of the house; my study would serve as the main attraction for interest in this house. It could be compared to the installing of a state-of-the-art kitchen with all the latest cooking and kitchen appliances on the market. This is one of the things attracting buyers to a house. My study would do the same in providing that special attraction. It would reveal to the community of Oranjemund that there is a very attractive side of this rural town in Namibia and that it is the provision of good quality education (public or private), and that there would be a choice



for parents to consider. This will be the attraction and retention factor, which is very important for stabilising skilled labour in Oranjemund.

The main research methods identified for gathering data would be focus groups, a conceptual analysis and participation in interviews (See 2.5). These methods were identified to be most suitable for the manner in which way the study is conducted and in which way it overlaps with the project of de-linking the school from Namdeb operations.

## 2.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research question guides the research. It is thus important that the research question be studied and phrased correctly. The research question for the study kept me focused, not only on the study, but also the project. I kept on being acutely aware of the overlap between the two, namely to find a suitable education solution for the community and to establish whether there is room for a private school in this community.

The main research question for the study is:

*Is there a space for private school education in a small Namibian town?*

By asking the correct questions, the research question becomes clearer.

Why? Is there enough trust in the public-school system? What is it that the parents expect to be delivered from a private school?

How? Which curriculum would be followed?

When? This is always as soon as possible.

The sub-questions are:

- Is there an ‘appetite’ for a private school in town?
- What? What is it that the parents want? Is this going to satisfy their needs in terms of their children’s education?
- Would a private school in this town be able to sustain itself? How? How is a private school going to be funded?
- What is the GRN policy position on a private school in town?

## 2.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In my opinion, research in any form is aimed to give a better understanding of concepts in relation to each other. The research should be a systematic process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon in which we are interested or about which we are concerned. It should give us a different perspective.

It was thus needed that a proper research being done to assist the Town Transformation Team with the best possible advice regarding a suitable education solution for Oranjemund and particularly on the focus of my study, whether there would be still a place for a private school in this community. Since the research would involve and affect the community, the correct study must be done to “look through the correct lens” in order to correctly identify and understand the issues related around the research question. My choice of research was drawn to Qualitative Research.

### 2.4.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research can be defined as attempting to understand and interpret daily occurrences and social structures and actions, and the meaning people give to phenomena in their life-worlds (Le Roux, 2005). Le Roux (2005:3) mentions, that at its simplest level, qualitative research (QR) is concerned with levels of meaning and developing explanations of social phenomena. This research is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. It provides us with a platform to understand daily occurrences in relation to the moment or environment it is happening in. Qualitative Research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem. The purpose of qualitative research methodology is to understand how subjective realities are produced and it is therefore used when the “how”, “what”, “why”, or “in what way” of the human experience and perceptions need to be understood. The research is better understood in relation to its purpose by asking the questions above. It gives meaning and purpose and it provides a foundation to understand the question or object under research. Generally, qualitative research can be defined as “the attempt to obtain an in-depth understanding of the meanings and definitions of human situations” (Le Roux, 2005:3).

My interest in the Qualitative Research method was further deepened through Sandelowski (2000), who argues that *qualitative descriptive* studies have as their goal a comprehensive summary of events

in the everyday terms of those events. Researchers conducting qualitative descriptive studies stay close to their data and to the surface of words and events. Qualitative descriptive designs typically are an eclectic but reasonable combination of sampling, and data collection, analysis, and representation techniques. Qualitative description study is the method of choice when straight descriptions of phenomena are desired (Sandelowski, 2000).

I applaud the comments made about voices advocating radical challenges to traditional research practice (Edwards & Brannelly, 2017). The traditional model of research is being questioned where the people being researched is seen as subjects and those who are doing the research as the experts who are able to analyse and evaluate. Research agendas should be reset and done in a collaborative manner so that those who are (or the situation) that is being researched, are included. Edwards and Brannelly (2017:1) describe this as the democratisation of research and that is one of the key methodological challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Reasons for this research transformation range across projects to address social justice and to transform society.

It is crucial that the citizens in the small town of Oranjemund with an interest in education not be excluded from the research. This would include learners, parents, teaching staff, the supporting businesses and related GRN line ministries. The town transformation process has been based so far on fairly democratic principles. These would be the democratic right of movement, the freedom of choice and the right to participation. The responsibility of the research team would be to allow participants their rightful place to participate freely in exercising the right to be involved in developing an education solution for Oranjemund. This would stretch even further where the parents would have a democratic right to make a choice between public or affordable private school education. The town referred to in this research is going through a democratic transformation. This justifies the selection of QR for this research.

Of the different approaches discussed by Edwards and Brannelly, the Inclusive Methodologies would suit my study very well. There are different stakeholders involved in this study and each will have a significant role to play to develop recommendations for this study. According to Edwards and Brannelly (2017:2) people who are the focus of the research are involved in its design and conduct. The research is of concern and benefits the research participants, reaches and represents their grounded knowledge and treats them with respect. This resonates well with the methodology for my study since this approach provides the principles for democratic dialogue and participatory equality. It draws those who are treated as subjects of the study in as partners and empower them to participate meaningful in the research. Democratisation of research is concerned with ensuring the community

may benefit from it (Edwards & Brannelly, 2017:5). Generally, qualitative research can be defined as “the attempt to obtain an in-depth understanding of the meanings and definitions of human situations” (Le Roux, 2005).

I deduce that the benefits of a qualitative approach are that the information is richer and has a deeper insight into the phenomenon under study. In seeking an education solution for the Mine and evaluating the provision of a private school in this rural town, I would argue that the methodology suits this study very well. I believe that I am not the only one thinking; “How did we find ourselves in this situation and how are we going to improve it or get out of it?” The whole community is involved.

### 2.4.2 Hermeneutics

During my search to understand qualitative research my attention was drawn to the work done by Hans-Georg Gadamer about his philosophical work on **hermeneutics**. It certainly is a thought provoking and insightful piece to study.

The question arises; how do we understand our current position related to the space we are currently operating in? The meaning of *Being* - the result of analysing the unique features of *Dasein* (Being) and *Auslegung* (interpretation) describes the human existence as a concrete way of *being* in this world (Gadamer, 1975). This view of ontology (two levels of analysis), (a) ontological: dealing with the nature of being and (b) epistemological: relating to the theory of knowledge, especially regarding its methods, validity, and scope, and the distinction between justified belief and opinion, was partly adopted by Hans-Georg Gadamer. The philosophical **hermeneutics** was developed from this - giving meaning to text (Gadamer, 1975). The fusion of horizons is a very good description of how perspectives from participants and my own understanding merge together to formulate the outcome of the study. Perceptions and perspectives differ for each stakeholder like parents, the private school staff, the Mine and the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC). Their understanding of the research topic differs and by two-way feedback and dialogue, a clear picture would emerge.

Kabende (2015:37) states in her MEd study thesis about hermeneutics “*I began by asking myself a question: What is hermeneutics? Gadamer (1977:xii), who is seen as the father of hermeneutics, argues that hermeneutics comprises all of those situations in which we encounter meanings that are*

*not immediately understandable but require interpretive effort*". I agree with this statement, taking my study in consideration.

My study would thus focus on a full understanding of the situation at hand and the outcome sought. The literature review would also greatly assist in developing an understanding of the current situation pertaining to the topic of this study. Gadamer is credited with developing hermeneutics to discover what is common to all modes of understanding and also to show that understanding is never a subjective relation to a given object, but also to the history of its effect (Cubukcu, 2012).

Gadamer (Cubukcu, 2012:110) describes a prominent recurring theme in interpretation as the hermeneutic circle - the circle of understanding. The foundational law of all understanding belongs to the being of that which is understood (Cubukcu, 2012:110).

Gadamer is credited with developing a hermeneutics not as an attempt to prescribe a method or set of methods for understanding, but to discover what is common to all modes of understanding and to show that understanding is never a subjective relation to a given 'object', but to the history of its effect; in other words, understanding belongs to the being of what is understood (Cubukcu, 2012:110). For instance, the dilemma regarding the appropriate distinction between background knowledge and facts. Testing of hypotheses requires a clear distinction/separation between the hypothetical components in the observation data, on one side, and the theoretical background knowledge on the other side. This can be solved by honestly looking at what is fact and what background knowledge is and separate these ideas. Since I will be part of the research and being, I cannot argue that the research will be done objectively. However, I argue that the research may lead us to a solution for basic education in Oranjemund, and will assist to develop a view from the correct angle whether the provision of a private school is viable for this community or not. Thus, Hermeneutics as the methodology of interpretation can provide guidance for solving problems of interpretation of human activities, text and meaningful material by offering a toolbox to assist with specific problem interpretation.

I found these descriptions very relevant in the intended research; the needs of the community can be measured against best practices and against what is needed on grass-roots level. This is one of the reasons why I got very excited when I read through Kabende's thesis. I agree with her comments about the several aspects of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and that it could assist in textual understanding as indicated below:

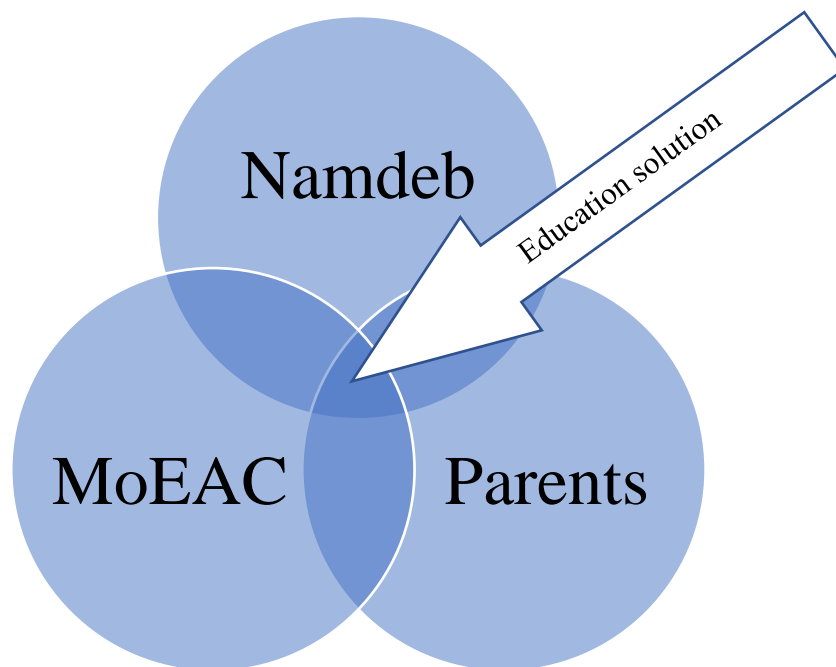
Firstly, Gadamer's hermeneutical question about "what does it mean to understand?" refers. It really is about what you, as a reader understand from your perspective and background, which assist in understanding the new information in relation with your background. My study needs to deal with information related to the understanding of the complexities a closed community offered for many years and it is difficult for readers outside this environment to relate to this experience. It is therefore important the community understands what an open town would mean, but on the same time, new members from outside Oranjemund would also need to be informed about what to expect and why "old Oranjemunders" behave and think in certain ways.

Secondly, the historicity of understanding, or the historical interpretation of text refers to us making ourselves part of the text. How does the text relate to my background or frame of reference? It would not be wise to ignore the historical facts of how this town arrived at this point in time, without looking at past events. How were policies formed and how did it happen that there was only a private school for so many years?

Thirdly, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is the concept of a fusion of horizons. I can agree with this, since the vision of the Mine since many years back to the vision of the Mine as it is today, differs completely. Apart from this, both visions share the one outcome and that is how to mine profitably in this mining area. Many years ago, when this Mine was started, the vision on their horizon was to have a replica of a town on the mining site offering all "normal" town amenities, with the view of moving out of Oranjemund once mining has been done and perhaps demolish the town. However, that was a bridge to cross later and successive Mine management teams took over from each other and finally brought us to the proclamation of Oranjemund as a town and the subsequent process of town transformation. The latest vision on the horizon of the Mine is to leave a positive legacy behind so that the town can become self-sustainable beyond diamond mining. This vision of hope certainly is why I was being excited reading through Kabende's understanding of Gadamer's Hermeneutics. The fusion of the text with these two horizons give substance to understanding so that it becomes one idea. The provision of a horizon gives hope or can initiate the setting of achievable goals. By seeing these goals, it means that the reader can put himself into the position from his own perspective and still relate to the situation. I would further describe it as a driver of a vehicle is facing forward, he sees the horizon in front of him, but while looking into the rear-view mirror, he can also see the horizon where he was coming from. This combines or fuses together his view as part of his journey on this road. He knows (sees) where he is coming from and he knows (sees) where he is going to.

Fourthly, Kabende (2015:41) explains that Gadamer's hermeneutics relates to the dialogical nature of understanding. This refers in simple terms how the text converse or speaks to the interpreter or the listener. It could be as simple as a conversation between two people. Text needs to be written or spoken in a language that is comprehensible to the reader. Following Gadamer, I understand that meaning arises from and through dialogue; meaning is created and constructed through active engagement with the text.

The text I will analyse will be the following – Is there space for private school education in a small Namibian town? The real need or the 'hunger' for private school education must exist and there must be enough parents wanting to enrol their children in an affordable self-sustainable education model that will allow for quality education.



*Figure 3: Main stakeholders in search of education solution*

Figure 3 illustrates that each main stakeholder has a different perspective about their understanding of the education solution. The overlaps between the circles indicate that the interests and motivations are similar to that of other stakeholders. It also indicates the merging of horizons and how different ideas and understanding come to overlap to formulate a suitable education solution that will satisfy most, if not all, the expectations of each of the stakeholders.

I argue that it would make it easier if the reader relates to the text from his frame of reference so that the message in the text and the reader are on the same page. The reader must be open or perceptive enough to understand the text. This way, the interpreter relates to the text applicable to him. The

interpreter could be in a position to translate the text, form an opinion and participate conducive and meaningfully in follow-up conversations. It is difficult to make meaning of text without understanding it. I have seen many examples of either where the speaker is reserved in giving too much information, maybe because of confidentiality or sensitive issues around the future of the Mine. The other side is also true and there were many examples; the listener is not open enough for receiving the message (or text) and often listens for specific nuances for a specific and sometimes pre-mediated meaning.

Gaining a genuine understanding of the text one needs to be open to be informed or questioned by the text, or to get actively involved in conversations around the understanding of the text. By making it your own and by understanding, one can work with the text and make meaning of the text compared to the current situation.

Lastly, the role of authorial intention in interpretation, according to Gadamer (2006:43), the text has no fixed meaning. It depends what the reader is making of the text, how the reader understands what the author intended. I see it as this is where the reader becomes a new expert with the information, but formed his arguments on the base of the first author. The meaning of text means that a subject could have many different meanings to many different people.

## **2.5 RESEARCH METHODS**

It is important to understand what the concept *research method* means. Research method refers to all the tools that one can use to collect data, be it qualitative or quantitative. This implies that we can only find answers to our research questions when we collect data (Kabende, 2015). Research methods are the tools that are used to gather data (Dawson, 2002:37). For instance, to address the question whether there is space for a private school in this community, policy documents need to be analysed to establish their suitability for this community post mining activities. A document is an example of a research method. Policy documents usually give guidance, but could also limit decision making processes. It would mean that my study would rely heavily on my participation in stakeholder engagement sessions and study the policies influencing them.

Participation in the following research methods were selected for this study: Focus groups, Conceptual analysis and Documentary analysis. It is important to point out that my research would mainly involve participating as a member in focus groups and meetings with the major stakeholders.



This would be initiated and facilitated by the Mine. I am allowed to make use of the data and information collected during these sessions for analysis.

My role as a participant in meetings and focus groups allowed me to gather the necessary data and information I needed for my research. I am not convening meetings, nor am I calling focus groups together. I am assisting in facilitating the meetings between the major stakeholders through my position as principal of Namdeb's private school. The data retrieved would not include intimate details of budgets and participants' personal views. The data will be condensed and analysed to formulate a general consensus of each stakeholder position on the search for an education solution.

Meetings aiming to solicit the necessary information were set up to gather as much information as possible. The aim of this was to "leave no stone unturned" in seeking answers to the problem. Regular meetings were initiated by the Town Transformation team (TTT) with all stakeholders, ranging from the School Management Committee (SMC), private school staff, public school management, the Regional Office and Head Office of the MoEAC, Namdeb management and Human Resources (HR) experts. The data collection approaches involved participatory interaction with individuals and interest groups as per direct interaction with individuals in focus group settings.

Below is an extract from a letter I submitted to the Research Ethics Committee (REC) when applying for ethics approval. This will clearly support my explanation of my role as a researcher:

*As explained in the introduction of the study proposal, the diamond mining company I am working for as school principal, has appointed me as project manager (**temporarily, letter attached**) to investigate the de-linking of the school from the company and find an education solution for the community of Oranjemund (this was my 'project'; to assist in appointing a consultant and deal with all the administration around his work). Part of this task, was to establish whether there would be a place for a private school in this community (**This is where I saw an opportunity for further study, because there were no examples in Namibia we could draw information from – point 4**). The project team realized that we would need an academic study to provide some kind of authority for our proposals (**I started reading up on the matter and knocked on the US's door, since I completed my BEd Hons in 2008**). It was with this in mind that the SU was approach and I discussed the initial idea with Prof Berte van Wyk. (**This was my suggestion which I discussed with my supervisor at work – EXCO member of Namdeb. I was not instructed or commissioned by my employer do conduct the study. If I brought the REC under the wrong impression, please accept my apology**).*

*The project team is scheduling meetings and discussions with all stakeholders as focus groups in the form of workshops or brain-storming sessions. (**I coordinate and arrange staff meetings and parent meetings for the school, but the staff and parents are then addressed by a member of Namdeb senior management, usually by the two persons above me on the project team, or by the Namdeb COO or CEO. The reason for this is simple; I am not the owner of the school nor am I the employer of the staff. The same applies with the Namibian Education Department – MoEAC; I arrange the meetings with them and all logistics, but I have no mandate to negotiate any arrangements regarding the future of the status of the school, buildings or infrastructure – I participate and give institutional***

*advice, but Namdeb Board takes decisions. These decisions are executed through the relevant EXCO member, which is the Town Transformation Lead). I am participating in this and I am allowed to use the information gathered (minutes, notes for the record, etc). (I dropped this, since I have no use for the information gather herein) by the Namdeb Project Team (Town Transformation Team) to study the possibility of establishing a private school in this community. (I understand where the confusion comes in; I was appointed temporarily as project manager for education, but since Namdeb established the education model, my work was done in the main office block and I reported back at the school as full-time principal again since February 2018. Since then, I have been paying attention to completing my study to establish whether there is a place for a private school in this rural community. I am still part of the Town Transformation Team and we are currently rolling out the transforming and transferring stages of the whole project – town, health and education included. I don't have school holidays and have to take leave as the normal Namdeb employees do – we work full-time on the outstanding processes).*

*If one thus looks at this, I am mainly gathering data by participation. I am not conducting interviews, facilitating workshops with focus groups (The TTT has facilitators who are facilitating all interactions and processes for the sake of consistency). This would mean that I am changing my application for ethics clearance to suit these circumstances.*

As part of managing the project, a Stakeholder Engagement Log was created to record all contact sessions, meetings and conversations with key stakeholders. This assists the TTT to keep track of whom was spoken to about what, when and where. Stakeholders easily feel that they are the key to the answers and if neglected, extracting data from them complicates matters.

For example; the Mine management team has changed considerably over the last couple of years. Key members were appointed in promotion positions away from the project team, members were redeployed elsewhere on the Mine or in the Group, or members of the Group resigned and left the employment of Namdeb. We, from a project team perspective, realised that the TTT was not aligned with Namdeb management anymore. This meant that meetings and presentations were scheduled where previous presentations, discussions and decisions were updated and presented again. Fresher and better arguments followed with better insights and understanding. This assisted us immensely in developing strategies to stay aligned with the Mine's expectations.

Another example while focussing on the purpose of this study to establish the need of a private school, it was discovered that the scene changed very dramatically. Parents serving on the SMC indicated that they were adamant to retain the private school at all costs and promised their support, but when faced with the facts, changed their minds. Key members of the SMC felt that they were left out of the final decision-making process and therefor resigned as members. They were requested to remain on the SMC to assist with the transformation of the private school from being in Namdeb ownership to being in parental ownership. The parents are currently declining this offer. Other parents were elected

as representatives. This, however, does not mean that there is not a need for a private school in this town.

Very formal settings regarding the meetings with the Namdeb Board or the senior officials of the MoEAC are taking place and notes for the record or minutes of these meeting are kept and circulated for correctness. Informal meetings are regularly conducted to share updates on the progress of the transformation of the school with staff and parents. Notes for the record would be circulated if any important announcements were to be made for instance regarding remuneration and the termination processes of the private school staff.

### **2.5.1 Focus groups**

My role as participant in the Mine's project has been explained in the section above. I gained permission to gather the relevant data to be used in finding an education solution for the community. The focus of my study is to research whether there is a place/room for a private school in Oranjemund. My role as principal in the community allows me to be part of all the stakeholder engagement sessions. Namdeb's TTT has worked relentlessly to identify relevant focus groups to gather input to formulate decisions on the future of the town. This involves sections like town management, health and education. Official permission to extrapolate data from these focus groups to be used in my research has been granted from Namdeb. Some recommendations from my research as spelled out in the thesis has been taken up in the Project Management Report on Education, I submitted to Namdeb.

The focus groups were the following: Namdeb Board, Namdeb Senior Management Group: EXCO, MoEAC, Town Transformation Team, the private school SMC, parents, private school staff and the private school learners. Figure 2 below illustrates the different focus groups. A circular illustration depicts that all focus groups are equally important and that each plays a vital role in finding the solution to the research question.

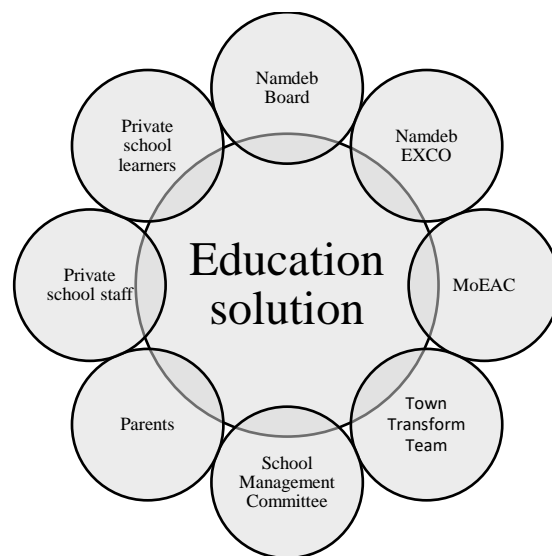


Figure 4: Overlapping focus groups

Each focus group can briefly be described as follows:

- **Namdeb Board:** This the umbrella Board of Directors overlooking Namdeb Diamond Mining Company's operations and performances.
- **Namdeb EXCO:** The executive committee supervising the direct operations of each of the satellite mines, safety, security, town management, education and health.
- **MoEAC:** The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture's role as major stakeholder in education supervising adherence to the Namibian Education Act.
- **Town Transformation Team:** This team supports each other in providing a platform for transformation and change on grassroots level.
- **School Management Team:** The committee is selected by the private school parents to represent their interests in the education of their children.
- **Parents:** Regular engagement sessions with parents where input is solicited at parent meetings through presentations and Q&A sessions.
- **Private school staff:** Teachers and administration staff are included in the research processes as it involves job security, remuneration and benefits of each employee.
- **Private school learners:** Their future subject choices are important for career planning. Stability in the transformation phase would be key to their successes in their external examinations.

The sampling technique selected for these focus groups was fairly simple, since they are grouped already. There are mainly two methods of sampling; probability (also known as a random sample) or a non-probability sample (also known as a purposive sample) (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison,

2007:110). Members of the wider population will be excluded. Only the key stakeholders will be involved. The sample deliberately avoids representing the wider population; it seeks only to represent a particular group or a particular named section of the wider population.

Purposive sampling is often a feature of qualitative research. Cases to be included in the sample are often hand-picked because of their specific purpose, for example: a group of parents, teachers, learners, etc. (Cohen *et al*, 2007:115).

Methods of gathering data is important as pointed out by Dawson (2002:33). Focus groups would be necessary to gather the information needed. Focus groups may be called discussion groups or group interviews. A number of people are asked to come together in a group to discuss a certain issue (Dawson, 2002). This method would seem to be the mainstay of my research. My experience was that an effort must be made to keep the group as consistent as possible. In other words, the same people must represent the particular focus group for consistency in arguments and narratives. As Dawson (2002:30) points out, a facilitator is important who introduces the topic, asks specific questions, controls digression and stops break-away conversations. In my experience this is one of the key factors where the project lost impotence; the focus groups changed significantly over the period of the study. The Mine management team changed due to transfers, promotions, secondments and resignations. The same happened with the school board (SMC). The same facilitators were not available every time, which had an impact on the flow of the work sessions. Focus groups have advantages and disadvantages as illustrated in Table 1 below (Dawson, 2002).

### The Focus Group Method: Advantages and Disadvantages

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Can receive a wide range of responses during one meeting.	Some people may be uncomfortable in a group setting and nervous about speaking in front of others.
Participants can ask questions of each other, lessening impact of research bias.	Not everyone may contribute.
Helps people to remember issues they might otherwise have forgotten.	Other people may contaminate an individual's views.
Helps participants overcome inhibitions, especially if they know other people in the group.	Some researchers may find it difficult or intimidating to moderate a focus group.
The group effect is a useful resource in data analysis.	Venues and equipment can be expensive.
Participant interaction is useful to analyse.	Difficult to extract individual views during the analysis.

Table 2: *The focus Group Method: Advantages and disadvantages (Dawson, 2003:30)*

I agree with Dawson that the idea of a focus group consisting of a number of people is to obtain a group opinion (2002:37). Regular meetings are important.

#### 2.5.2 Conceptual analysis

For a conceptual analysis, I was impressed with the work done by Noël David Adams and it suits my research methods. A conceptual analysis is understanding the exact meaning of the words that describes a problem which is central to comprehending the problem (Adams, 2004). A conceptual analysis assists us in understanding an idea or it will assist us in making sense of data. To have an understanding of a concept, “covers both the experience of grasping a principle and the ability to discriminate and use words correctly”. The point is to “see” through the words or having a picture of the concept (Hirst & Peters, 1998:30). It is important to note that it would be wrong to assume that a documentary analysis is critical analysis (Mills, 1990).

Probing for possible ideas around the research question, I often received open and honest opinions from members of the community from all walks of life. They vary in ideas, but one similarity is, that everyone speaks about the transformation of education in town; some have different ideas, but they are all about the same issue. To analyse these ideas will assist in making a conceptual analysis. Much of what could be called a conceptual analysis seems to consist of looking for logically necessary conditions. Wittgenstein, according to Hirst and White (1998:31) describes different concepts as a “family” united ‘*by a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing; sometimes overall similarities, sometimes of detail*’ – rather like the *similarities between faces of people belonging to the same family*.

I agree that a conceptual analysis assists in avoid looking at the study not in a stereotyped way or with the paradigm of just one type of word before us. Concepts can only be understood in relation with other concepts. Educational matters related to private schools and public schools, in relation with their communities, can only be understood when compared with similarities in other communities. Concepts are linked with the social life of a group and it would be very difficult for a private individual to have a purely private concept. In the case of education, there would be different emphases and differences on valuation. The objective of an analysis is to get a clearer understanding of the different concepts. The point would be to see through the concepts to get a better grasp of the differences and similarities (Hirst & White, 1998:33).

### **2.5.3 Documentary analysis**

A documentary analysis serves as useful tool to gather information that is helpful in explaining social and education practices. This means that analysing documents provides a better insight into a situation and also provides clearer explanations of matters in education (Best & Kahn, 2006).

It is important to realise that a documentary analysis may be limited in certain aspects. Several limitations of documentary analysis, such as authenticity, credibility, representing and meaning may be identified. The authenticity of a document concerns its genuineness; whether it is actually what it claims to be (Alasuutari *et al.*, 2009:293). Kabende ( 2015:55) mentions that in order to ensure reliability of the documentary source in her study, the inclusion of each document was guided by the following questions:

- Is the document an original or a copy and has it been corrupted in any way?

- What about the authorship: is it possible to authenticate the identity of those responsible for producing the document?

Many decisions and results of the application of policies have influenced the history of the development of the social fibre in Oranjemund. Namdeb being the custodian of mining activities, the town and all its amenities, health and education, needed to draw up policies and procedures for every level of its operations. This was done in line with the requirements of the mining licence. Safety and security were part of these important policies. In this approach the historian declares a perspective which informs the reconstruction of the past events. There is no necessary view of the progress of history towards a particular outcome, but there is a view that particular interests have been manifested through a historical epoch and that these can be reconstructed through an analysis of documents and events.

To be able to study the policies influencing the historical development of the education processes in Oranjemund, a proper documentary analysis would be needed. Data related to learner numbers, the number of available classrooms and the number of teaching staff would be a valuable resource for information influencing the outcomes of recommendations. Financial details and the school budget would only be expressed in percentages and not the actual values, which will contribute to the gathering of the necessary information. A documentary analysis is therefore essential as a research method. The MoEAC's relevant policies were used in this research, as well as all relevant national newspaper articles and circulars emanating from the MoEAC. Namdeb policies were also used in this analysis.

I explained in Chapter Four how the policies and sudden changes in policies affected the community of Oranjemund in many ways. These policies were designed with the best intentions in mind, but not keeping every small rural town's uniqueness in mind. The MoEAC designs policies for the broader education spectrum, but leaves little room for manoeuvres within the perimeters of the policy to adapt to each small community's unique needs.

Namdeb policies were written with the view of protecting the Company's main assets and to produce diamonds safely while having the social responsibility of managing a town. The changes and challenges facing this dynamic community now will see many of the Mine's policies change together with the policies of the newly appointed local authority and GRN line ministries.



## 2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In an effort to describe the Research Methodology, I was very relieved to get to understand the difference between *methodology* and *method*. I described the difference and it basically means that *methodology describes the theory* behind research and *method describes the practical* part of the research. In other word; the *what* is different from the *how*.

The research methodology would remind me about the context in which the study is taking place, but also in the context, the study needs to be understood. For instance, the Mine needs to understand the needs of the community and the community needs to understand the needs of the Mine. The one cannot survive without the other and will always depend on the other. This relationship however will need to change for the sake of the future and that is where the method of the research will assist as well. The way data is going to be gathered and how the data is understood against the past and current circumstances, will determine the success of the recommendations that may be followed from the study.

The hermeneutics research methodology greatly assists in understanding the issue about where the community comes from and where it is planning to go. The past connects with future in a logical way. The way in which past and future information is going to be presented is going to determine the quality of participation of the residents of Oranjemund in shaping and accepting their new transformed town.

Analysing the applicable documents and policies will give us a clear insight in where mistakes were made in the past or even so, where answers to future problems were actually addressed already. Some policies will have to be adapted and some will have to be replaced by new policies addressing the future social development of Oranjemund as a normal town. Not only this, the Mine will relinquish many of these issues, which will have to be taken up by local government and the line ministries. Their policies and procedures are in place, but may need small adaptation regarding Oranjemund's transition from being a closed town to an open town.

I am extremely comfortable with the selected research methods. I am in the middle of finding the solution to the research question and I am well-experienced in my work as an education manager. The research methodology fits exactly in with my understanding of the research question and how it related to the community I serve.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Doing the literature review for the study proposal kick-started my hunger for more and relevant information on the subject. I encountered many articles and research studies done on topics related to private school education. The literature review includes academic studies and literature that need to be understood. The meaning obtained in the literature needs to be extracted and interpreted. The policy documents and related documentation in the form of circulars, notes and newspaper articles were interpreted and analysed to understand their meaning against the literature study. I was able to extract the following five meanings from the literature study that will be analysed to address the research question:

- Access to vs. choice of quality education,
- Sustainability,
- Funding and revenue streams,
- Return on investment, and
- Low-fee private schools.

Each one of the meanings above will be discussed under the same headings in this chapter.

To understand the context and development of Namibia's education system, I needed to take a look at how education delivery arrived at the point where it is today. This will shed some light on how the education selected for this remote community so many years ago developed to where it is today.

Prior to Namibia's independence from South Africa, education delivery in Namibia was fairly fractured and based on the Apartheid policies at the time. A Commission of Enquiry was appointed by the South African Government in 1962, under the chairmanship of Mr Frans Hendrik Odendaal, to submit a report with recommendations and a Five-Year Plan to accelerate the development of all non-white groups and to further develop the Native Territories in South West Africa (Namibia today). The Odendaal Plan, as it was referred to, prepared the way for South Africa to apply its controversial domestic "homelands" policy to South West Africa, intensifying separate development in the territory (Levinson, 1976). Each indigenous group in Namibia had its own representative government with its own education department reporting to the Administrator-General for South West Africa.

Only after Namibia's independence in 1990 were the rights of children to education inscribed in the constitution, supported by the Education Act (The Democratic Republic of Namibia, 2001). The rights of children to education were never regarded as an issue before the Mine was started. Soon after commissioning the Mine, a community school was started in a house, with less than 12 children. The private school was opened as a new school in 1952 and moved into its new premises, where the current private school still is located today (Corbett, 2002). The private school developed over the years to become one of the best private schools in the country. The school delivered many learners who developed their foundations at primary school level and who returned to their different communities as proud ex-private school learners. Some of these former learners are Coreen Swanepoel, the first woman to swim between Robben Island and Bloubergstrand (Disabled Olympiad), Kobus Wiese from SuperSport, and the country's current First Lady, Monica Geingos.

If I take the development of Oranjemund as a town into consideration, and looking at the scope of the work at hand, it will be a challenge in many regards to develop a suitable education solution. It is important that we embark on this process in the correct way and leave room for small adjustments along the way.

After the independence of Namibia in 1990, the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) embarked on an education transformation programme to redress the shortcomings of the Cape Education Department and the Bantu education system in practice in the country prior to its independence. I argue that the introduction of the Cambridge education system in Namibia was certainly a welcome change, but with it came norms and standards that made it difficult to spread the education system across the country. Equity was lost, however, when the policies of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) changed in order to allow access for as many learners as possible (The Democratic Republic of Namibia, 2001).

One of the outflows of this was the overcrowding of classes and the subsequent drop in education standards and discipline. Prior to Namibia's independence there were a number of private schools, mainly linked to church organisations that established these schools during the colonial era. After independence and with the decrease in education standards, parents in communities who wanted to maintain good quality education for their children established many private schools. This, of course, is a very costly endeavour, especially for the communities who opted for the IEB programme. Parents in these communities managed to fund and sustain these schools.

All private schools in Namibia are regulated through the Education Act 16 of 2001 of Namibia. All private schools are required to register with the MoEAC, even if the parents are home schooling their children.

The economic profile of the parent community of any private school will directly relate to how the school would be managed or funded. It is very difficult to establish whether parents would be able to afford the private school fees. One could assume that a certain portion of the parents would be able to do so, but there would still be a portion of parents who would like to see a return on their investment. The social return on investment would be a determining factor for parents and sponsors to invest in a school. As Cynthia Gair puts it (2001:2): "... [for] each dollar invested in our portfolio agencies' efforts, there are impressive, quantifiable resulting benefits to individuals and to society".

### **3.2 ACCESS TO vs. CHOICE OF QUALITY EDUCATION**

The Namibian Government, similarly as the Government of South Africa (SA), pledges quality education for all. The SA government is failing in this aspect and so is the Namibian government. As pointed out by Stacey Brewer (2011), the SA government realised the importance of education to alleviate poverty and to act as an influential contributing factor to economic growth and a prosperous future.

There is an existing practice amongst sub-Saharan countries to measure their successes in education by the number of learners having access to education, instead of measuring the success of education against the outcomes. Education for all means just that, but it does not address the quality of the education received. It ignores the objectives of education to teach learners skills and competencies that can assist them to develop and lead productive and fulfilling lives and to integrate meaningfully into their societies. Effective enrolment is mentioned as a key component (Spaull & Taylor, 2012). Learners should be enrolled at the appropriate age after reaching some growth milestones regarding numeracy and literacy so that the enrolment produces learning.

Access to primary school education is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (Spaull & Taylor, 2012:3) and was identified as a key area for any developing country to have its citizenry contributing to economic growth and income distribution. It is now widely accepted that the ability of a country to educate its youth cannot be measured only by access to education or enrolment rates, but rather by its ability to impart the necessary knowledge and skills to students to function as literate and numerate members of the broader society (Spaull & Taylor, 2012). From experience, I agree with

Spaull and Taylor that learners in the Namibian primary school system sit through six years of formal schooling without achieving the basic competencies in numeracy and literacy. I argue that the economic implications for the future are huge in the sense that re-training needs to take place once the learners reach the age where they seek employment. I noticed examples where ‘bridge years’ are being added to tertiary study programmes, with the main focus on teaching basic language and mathematics skills. Cognitive development is ignored and has a negative effect on the dreams and aspirations of the learners and their parents, and equally on the growth of the country’s economy. I further argue that, if any country would like to measure the success of its education, it must focus that measurement on the cognitive development of the citizenry. The annual national budget of the GRN allocates a huge sum to education, but in my opinion, the education ministries are struggling with a massive backlog due to the influences of Apartheid (in both SA and Namibia, black learners were not being offered quality education).

Due to the lack of confidence in the public-school education system, parents (rich and poor) choose to select private education when offered a choice and if it is affordable. It would thus be very essential that the funding model for private school education should suit that particular community’s financial means and also their educational needs (Brewer, 2011). Low-fee private schools need to offer a sustainable financial model to ensure that they are ‘an attractive investment opportunity’ (Brewer, 2011:10). Parents must get the feeling that it is worth spending the money on education rather than getting it for free. I argue that Africa is trailing behind when it comes to education in terms of literacy and mathematics, and many schools in South Africa are dysfunctional.

Namibia can be compared with the situation in South Africa; the MoEAC is struggling to provide enough resources to all the schools on time and to have enough schools in all the regions (rural and urban communities included). My experience and perception are that generally, private schools in Namibia are outperforming public schools on all levels: academically, sport, governance, healthy learner-teacher ratio, discipline, school attendance and lower absenteeism (both learners and staff).

Private schools are playing an increasingly important role in the education of learners in Namibia. It is costing parents and the private economic sector more and more every year to support private schooling initiatives through donations and grants – especially when one takes into consideration the fiasco with the miscalculation of the subsidy to be awarded to the private schools: The MoEAC, in a letter to all private schools and signed by the Permanent Secretary, acknowledged that a mistake had been made on their side by a misinterpretation of the formula for awarding the subsidy. Because

private schools were paid too much, according to the letter, payment of the subsidy was suddenly stopped (//Hoeseb, 2017). In Oranjemund's case, the subsidy was suspended for seven years.

This meant that, in most cases, private schools across Namibia suddenly found themselves in a situation where they could not rely on the income of the GRN subsidy. Learners depending on the support of this subsidy had to find places in public schools, and it was extremely traumatic and inconvenient in cases where these learners were preparing for their Grade 10 and 12 external examinations. The worst was that two private schools in the //Kharas Region faced closing their doors: one combined private school closed its secondary school, and the other one was a primary school that needed urgent additional funding or faced closing.

The current situation in Oranjemund is that there are two schools: one private school and one public school (opened in 2014). There is a perception that the public school is offering quality education for free compared to the quality education offered at the private school at a cost to the parents. The quality of education offered at both schools will be difficult to compare, since there is no way to establish the difference between the two schools claiming that they deliver quality education. Other than the annual Standardised Achievement Tests for Grades 5 and 7 (SATS), there are no real external methods to compare the performance of the two schools. The private school will have to prove that the education it offers is value for money.

A very relevant remark was made by Diana Green (1994:19) in her paper on the matter of quality in education: "... the answer will depend on who is making the judgement and for what purpose". Unfortunately, most governments in developing countries have made policy changes to allow for a focus on access to education, which has affected the quality of education (Courtney, 2008). The value proposition for the customer (learner and parent) would be a key factor for parents when presented with a choice between public and private school education for their children. Access to Namibian schools is a requirement of the MoEAC, and school principals are under pressure to fill classrooms to capacity, even if the learner numbers exceed the government norms (The Democratic Republic of Namibia, 2001).

The SATS test is a valuable external measurement tool to evaluate the quality of education amongst individual schools on a national level. There is a renewed focus on the quality of education, as can be seen from hundreds of reports and journal articles related to various international assessment programmes (such as PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS, SACMEQ and PASEC). Reporting on educational access without reference to the quality of schooling is misleading and paints an overly optimistic

picture of educational system progress in the developing world (Spaull & Taylor, 2012). I argue that it is important that there is a correlation between the internal reporting of results to the parents and the SATS results. If the SATS results are higher compared to the internal reporting, it might indicate that the internal processes are strict and the objectives are achieved. If the SATS results are very low compared against the internal reporting, it means that the educational achievements are inflated internally and that the numeracy and literacy objectives are overstated. This must be followed up by an honest academic audit and a proper analysis of the results. Correctives measures and appropriate interventions must be put in place to get the teaching on track in these specific fields.

In education, a standardised evaluation of students' learning outcomes and the corresponding publication of the results, usually in ranking order, are the most well-established instruments for ensuring widespread consumer information (Verger *et al.*, 2016). In Namibia, schools actually "compete" against each other in the National and Regional Rankings at the end of each academic year. This is usually a good yardstick to measure a school's performance and acts generally as an attraction for parents who wish to find good schools for their children. Educators know that there are many other factors that play a role in each year's results on the ranking lists, but the bottom line remains: the school performs very well or not at all when parents see the results in the newspapers.

A more "private" performance feedback about a school's performance is usually the Standardised Achievements Testing (SATS) done once a year in certain grades. These results are not widely published and are used by principals and school managers to see how their teachers and learners are performing in certain subjects, and how the school fares against other schools in the same region or area.

An interesting, but very important, observation made by (Verger, BonaL & Zancajo, 2016:224) is about the choices parents have when it comes to selecting a school for their children: Parents exercise their choices not only about where to place their children, but also consider the choice of rather taking their children to another, better performing school if they are not satisfied with their children's current school. This, in turn, generates greater competitiveness between schools to attract not only the most, but also the best-performing, learners (and parents) to their schools. The school may react by increasing its quality of education and efficiency in education delivery.

Verger *et al.* (2016:234) point out how the Chilean government uses the publication of education performance results so that the quality of education at Chilean schools could be visible to all members of society, and especially to students' families – thereby serving to democratise the educational



process. I would further argue that this kind of action would lend credibility and transparency to the education efforts in the MoEAC and also in the different regions of Namibia.

One of the many concerns about Namibia's public schools is that the quality of education is declining in the rural areas and has not improved for a number of years. This could be because it is difficult to attract teachers to these areas, where water and sanitation are scarce, and there is not in the line of suitable accommodation and utilities (Booyesen, 2005). Every year the dropout rate seems to increase and the standard of teaching is dropping. The results of the SATS indicate that there are huge problems in the numeracy, language (reading and comprehension) and primary education areas of the children's development (*Republikein*, 2019). They are lacking a proper upbringing and are facing numerous challenges to attend school, such as travelling vast distances, sometimes on an empty stomach. The GRN is trying to provide at least one meal per day to learners, especially in the rural areas. This on its own also seems to be a daunting task, with the resources, transport and honesty about the delivery seemingly ineffective. Food disappears to be sold in small shops in the rural areas. The learners also have other chores to do, such as looking after livestock and helping with the preparation and harvesting of the family's small agricultural activities.

Which type of school would be suitable in this rural community? Schools in Namibia can generally be categorised as follows:

- Government schools: fully funded by the GRN, including the provision of free textbooks, stationery, transport and, in some cases, meals. The government schools follow the national curriculum, setting timetables, lesson allocation and school hours. The government hires staff with input from the school boards;
- Government-aided schools: these are usually church schools or schools privately governed, but fully aided financially by the GRN. These schools follow the national curriculum on timetable, school hours, subjects, textbooks and eligibility for teacher recruitment. Pass requirements are also similar to schools in the government sector. In some cases, these schools receive funding from churches to complement the staffing needs or any other need as required (textbooks, boarding, meals, etc.);
- Private schools: in Namibia, these schools can be divided as follows – those that follow the national curriculum, subjects, school hours and textbooks, but enrich the curriculum with the additional funding they source from sources other than the government subsidy. The other private schools are those that are following another curriculum, such as the Independent Examination Board (IEB) or the full Cambridge System. These schools are normally the most



expensive private schools in Namibia. Although some of them can be found in rural areas, most are in the main centres across Namibia.

It is compulsory for all private schools in Namibia to register with the MoEAC. They may not operate without a registration certificate from the MoEAC. The private schools are regulated and need to comply with the stipulations in the Education Act. The learner-teacher ratio in most of the private schools is very favourable and the classes are not overcrowded. What is alarming is that there are some private schools which exist only to obtain the subsidy from the MoEAC. The quality of education in some of these schools is not up to standard and the pass rate is also very questionable.

### **3.3 SUSTAINABILITY**

The number of residents in Oranjemund would not dictate the number of learners who would attend a private school. The number of learners in the private school would depend on the affordability of the school fees and the number of parents expressing the need for private school education. The question here would be: *Would a private school in Oranjemund be sustainable?* The number of inhabitants in Oranjemund in 2007 was 7 789 (Hoadley, 2007). There are about 11 000 inhabitants in Oranjemund now, but the learner number between the two schools remains at about 1 000.

I argue that the presentation of a full and balanced daily programme filled with learning activities would be regarded as value for money. Economic value is created when there is a financial return on investment. Social value is created when resources, inputs, processes or policies are combined to generate improvements in the lives of individuals or society as a whole (Gair, 2001:4). The value proposition for parents in making a choice to either pay for a child's education or to send the child to a public school must be weighed on whether it is affordable or not. I argue that, as soon as parents are able to afford better education for their children, they would consider registering their child at a private school. Developing reading, writing and numeracy are important in attracting learners to any school. The moment a parent pays for schooling, an entitlement could exist that the child must be able to perform according to the school fees. This is in some cases quite a challenge, especially if the child comes from an English-deprived background or the child has learning difficulties or learning disabilities.

I am of the opinion that this leads to school accountability: As mentioned in the paragraph above, the moment parents are paying for the education of their children, the demand and entitlement start to exist. The school is accountable for the education, performance and progress of the children and, if

there would be stumbling blocks in their way, the school is required to 'sort it out'. This is because of the perception that the child's education was 'purchased', and the parents' demand to see good results or at least an increase in results can therefore be understood. Public school teachers tend to get away with a lack of teaching and showing progress in the sense that the reporting of non-performing teachers happens through a tedious exercise – through the school's board, to the Circuit Inspector, through the Regional Inspector and finally to the Regional Director. By the time the complaint reaches the Regional Office, the issue has sorted itself out or the term has ended.

Learning outcomes are another key factor attracting learners to a school or retaining them. In the absence of any comparative school performance data (such as exam pass rates), parents judge the reputation of a school using a range of 'quality proxies', such as the state of the buildings, attitudes of the teachers and the provision of equipment – particularly computers (Bangay & Latham, 2013). The general perception is that, on average, private schools are more internally effective. These schools attract better-qualified, motivated and energised teachers. Private schools tend to use the latest technological innovations such as teaching aids, producing higher teaching achievements, and have a more favourable teacher-learner ratio. Teacher absenteeism also seems to be lower in private schools (Bangay & Latham, 2013:246).

The choice parents have in a small rural community would increase awareness between the public school and the private schools to focus on teaching outcomes. In the absence of any comparative school performance data (such as exam pass rates) parents rely on reputation using a range of 'quality proxies' such as the state of the buildings, attitudes of the teachers and the provision of equipment – particularly computers (Bangay & Latham, 2013:246). A choice for parents between schools in Oranjemund would be good for both schools in the sense that the schools will have to make sure that they are delivering top-class education in order to attract parents. Bangay and Latham (2013:246) mention that whether competition can drive up quality for all (both those studying in private schools and in the adjacent government schools) is a valid question and worthy of empirical testing. I argue that the schools in Oranjemund would compete for parents/learners from the same community, especially those parents who are supporting their children's schooling activities. Parents willing to serve on school committees to raise funds are increasingly hard to find.

I argue that parents must feel that their child is receiving the best education at their school of choice. When they are contributing financially, the expectance rises for the child to perform well. Any private school in a small rural community would realise that it must deliver on the basic demand for quality education. It would be very detrimental to the private school if the public school was better resourced

and delivered better education than the private school. Parents would certainly then rather select to support whatever activities the public school was offering. These parents could end up supporting the public school so much that there would certainly be no place for a private school, especially if education comes at a cost.

The aim of any private school in a rural setting must be to provide an affordable alternative schooling option (Bernstein, 2014:38) on par with what is offered in the bigger towns in Namibia or even in the capital city (bearing in mind that it must also be affordable so that the existence of the school is justified). Justifying the existence of a private school in a rural community is going to hinge heavily on whether there would be enough parents demanding quality education at a private facility and who would be able to afford this perceived better quality education.

Governing bodies will have to come up with a solid financial plan, which will be sustainable and also able to expand into the future. Revenue streams must be dependable and provide a steady income to be able to afford the normal expenses associated with private school education. Delivering a perceived better education would mean that governing bodies must be very creative in applying resources and revenue effectively without wasting the parents' money. (The parents must always feel that what they receive is value for money = value proposition is key here.)

I would argue that staff at a private school need to be utilised at maximum capacity. From my experience, the lesson allocation per teaching staff member must be balanced so that the amount spent on the teacher's salary justifies the time spent in contact sessions with the learners. The appointment of administration staff needs to justify the value they add to the school. For instance, collecting the school fees, budgeting, maintenance and developing of resources must be in line with what is financially available. In the same vein, private schools need to stay relevant and up to date with the latest developments in education. Staff and resources need to be updated regularly in this regard, and this cost must be calculated over a period.

I have experienced that private schools sometimes seem to try to outdo each other in offering the latest teaching technologies and, in doing so, they spend vast amounts on technology devices that do not actually add any measurable value to the teaching or learning moment and end up losing valuable teaching time. This, in turn, contributes to the increase in school fees and might contribute to the private school putting itself out of the reach of parents.

To eradicate poverty, one of the focus areas would be to have quality education delivered in any developing country. To achieve this there are many areas that also need to feed into this noble idea on the national level. To be very specific, the same principle can be applied to the delivery of (quality) education in a small rural community.

In a study done in Tanzania, Ethiopia and Kenya by Shoko Yamada (2005), two highlights stand out: *Efficiency of resource distribution* and *private cost of education*. Rural communities across Namibia have the same experience as the abovementioned study describes; there are many instances where the delivery of ‘free’ education in Namibia is being hampered by the slow, or in some cases non-delivery of much-needed resources. Textbooks, stationery, food, hostel accommodation and teacher accommodation are the biggest issues the MoEAC is trying to deal with. There are many instances where education budgets are not utilised for what they were intended for in the regions, districts, circuits and schools. The Minister of Education and Culture, Ms Katrina Hanse-Himarwa addressed this issue at a meeting with education personnel where she raised her concerns about the management of capital projects (Lamprecht, 2018). There are many reasons for this misappropriation of funds, including corruption, lack of accountability, lack of the necessary skills, and a lack of training by those who are in charge. This contributes considerably to the poor performances of public schools, especially in the rural areas. There is thus a need for private school education in which the outcomes could be better, but this comes at a cost – something not all parents in rural communities can afford.

My experience in our town is that parents working for private enterprises are most likely those who would be able to afford private school fees. In some cases, higher ranking GRN officials can also afford the private school fees and select to have their children educated at a private school rather than a public school.

Yamada (2005:11) describes how funding for resources has been devised so that the procurement processes can be decentralised to schools in order to speed up the delivery of resources, for instance text books. This is a very noble idea, but its success depends on the efficiency of the managers and officials at the particular school to follow the correct governance and procurement procedures. In some cases, these schools are so far away from major centres that they must cope with the additional costs of the delivery of the books. These schools also face major logistical obstacles in placing their orders. In some cases, schools do not have electricity or the internet. Placing an order by sending an email or a facsimile is out of the question. Any private school operating in a rural environment faces the same challenges in the delivery of resources. It is the way these challenges are faced and overcome that will contribute to a private school establishing itself in a small rural setting.

The MoEAC realised with the introduction of free basic education that school managers would battle to cover additional costs at schools. A development fund was established and made available to public schools at a certain amount per learner. Unfortunately, this subsidy from the GRN to public schools has been cut drastically due to the poor economic climate and the compounding financial crisis within the GRN (Booyesen, 2017). Without parents contributing towards school fees, public schools are going to have to be creative in raising extra funds to assist in the normal day-to-day running of their schools. Public schools differ from area to area and from region to region. Some areas or regions are more affluent than others and families are sometimes in a better financial situation. In bigger towns or cities in Namibia, one often sees both “rich” public schools and “poor” public schools.

Yamada (2005:14) correctly mentions that many countries have abolished school fees for basic education. This, however, does not mean that education does not cost anything. ‘Free education’ has been rolled out in Namibia, but a general decline is observed in many areas, like a healthy teacher-learner ratio, timeously delivery of text books, stationery and other resources, and the quality of teacher training and teaching, while there has been collapse in general maintenance and the upkeep of MoEAC school buildings and infrastructure.

It is expected from parents to assist with fundraising efforts and the general upkeep of the buildings, school desks and school gardens. I have experienced that there also is a general feeling of “I am paying taxes, so I am not paying for school fees” amongst public-school parents in Oranjemund. This, in turn, contributes to the collapse of upkeep and maintenance at public schools.

According to Yamada (2005:15), the share of education costs in households is as follows: Tanzania and Ethiopia: Households around 20% - Government around 80%. In Kenya, households contribute 60% and the Government 40%. In Namibia, these statistics would be higher for the GRN, although parents might argue that public schools are draining them for additional funds. The abolition of school fees may not have reduced the financial burden on parents/households for the costs of education. Parents are often required to assist financially to cover hidden costs for the extras needed at schools that the government does not provide. Parents contribute almost monthly by means of fundraisers for the school or charity events.

In a study done on emerging private education in Africa and what determines the choice of a school (Nishimura & Yamano, 2013), it was found that the number of private schools has increased drastically since the introduction of free education in Kenya. The research found that parents reacted

to the quality of education measured by the learner-teacher ratio of public schools by sending their children to private schools or transferring them to different schools. The study also took into consideration the wealth of households when making these decisions. It would seem that the poorer the household, the less chances are that parents could react to poor-quality education. Many community-based basic education projects were abandoned because of the lack of capacity (Nishimura & Yamano, 2013:267). Parents often cannot afford non-tuition fees and other contributions at the primary school level. An important point highlighted in this study is the question of equity. Is it fair to keep quality education away from low-income households depending on the provision of basic education by the government, while those who can afford it send their children to private schools? The study argues that private schools in this instance should be divided into two groups: high-cost private schools that provide high quality education to wealthy households in the urban areas, and low-cost private schools that are often financially supported and managed by communities and parents.

While the argument is focused on the choice parents have between free public-school education and private school education at a cost, an interesting observation is made in the study by Nishimura and Yamano (2013:268). It is about the choice parents have in urban areas amongst a number of public schools offering basic education at primary school level. In these areas, parents could relocate their children to the school offering the best public education. This perceived better education could be because of a number of reasons, like better-qualified and motivated teachers, and capable management teams making sure that the delivery of resources is adequate and demanding stronger parental involvement. The argument is thus that private schools should make sure that they are competitive and relevant, even in urban areas. One of the problems in many developing countries is that public schools generally are overcrowded because of the free education promised by governments (Nishimura & Yamano, 2013:266). This, in turn, creates an opportunity for private schools to get a footing in the area. The question about equity is then still valid, but could twist a little: why should parents who can afford better education for their children be denied a choice?

### **3.4 FUNDING AND REVENUE STREAMS**

The public school in Oranjemund is relying heavily on the regional financial department's support to fund all education activities. As Shoko Yamada (2005:9) puts it, there unfortunately are many instances when local spending units, such as regions, districts and schools, do not spend funds on the indicated purposes. This severely hampers any efforts to seek an education solution for education in the town.

The private school relies heavily on the financial support of Namdeb as the main contributor to its revenue. The parents of the private school will have to realise, and we hope to be able to convince them, that they are going to have to accept responsibility for developing reliable revenue streams to sustain the funding of the school. Namdeb covers 72% of the costs, while parents pay 28% through school fees.

Brewer (2011:14) states that organisational structures at schools should be guided by dedicated leadership with a greater understanding of the importance of revenue diversification, which would assist the school in achieving long-term sustainability. I would further argue that the academic reputation and parent confidence in the academic programme of the school would also play a significant role in attracting healthy revenue streams. Brewer (2011:116) summarises it very succinctly: “the optimal schooling cost model is reliant on the magnitude of the minimal cost of delivering quality educational services to each child”.

The lack of skills and knowledge among school managers in understanding administration costs, managing costs, cost estimation and unrealistic future expectations could jeopardise the financial viability of the school. Furthermore, experience in change management will be very crucial for the road we plan to embark on with the private school. Financial stability in a school is important, along with a healthy balance between revenue enhancement and cost reduction. However, the quality of education may not be compromised through the reduction of costs. Private schools would need to charge a fee that the members of the community are willing to pay, but it needs to be substantial enough to be able to make the school sustainable in the long term.

Diversifying the revenue streams of a school might also necessitate the idea of setting up smart partnerships with primary and secondary stakeholders. It will be very important, however, to manage the balance of influence of, for example, the parents as primary stakeholders, to maintain the balance of educational value and what the parent may perceive as a fair price to pay for it. Another idea would be to maintain a healthy relationship between a major sponsor as stakeholder and the school, but the influence of the major sponsor should not interfere with the educational programme of the school (Brewer, 2011:21). Public-private partnerships are certainly one of the options to be investigated (Tshabalala, 2014), since the GRN and Namdeb both are currently experiencing financial challenges. The problem may arise with public-private partnerships (PPP) being portrayed as a cost-effective policy solution to the access and quality problems that many education systems, especially in many developing countries, are facing. The primary objective of PPP would be to evoke and promote



healthy competition for resources between public and private schools as a means of enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education (Verger *et al.*, 2016).

The problem with the situation in Oranjemund is the total lack of spending power on the GRN side. The GRN budget was cut to such an extent that the Minister of Education in Namibia requested private enterprise to assist in delivering basic services to the MoEAC in terms of the delivery of materials, assisting with providing food for the school feeding programmes, making donations towards stationery needs and much more. This programme is called FENSI: Friend of Education in Namibia Special Initiative.

Complicating matters further with finding an education solution for this community would be the funding of educational matters and the revenue streams required for the extramural needs of the schools. The two local schools would compete for the same revenue streams, sponsorships and donations from the same businesses and service providers in town. The feeling amongst sponsors and donors might vary, but may be influenced by the idea that the private school is more privileged and that their parents are “rich”, while at the same time arguing that the public school’s parents are less privileged and “poorer” and therefore the public school should receive more financial benefits through donations and sponsorships. It could also be argued the other way around – that the private school might be seen as “struggling” financially while the public school is receiving financial assistance from the GRN and that the parents are not paying anything and getting everything for “free” - therefore the private school should be assisted more.

The situation in Oranjemund is that both schools are currently seen as equals when it comes to requests for sponsorships and donations. It is (still) perceived that all children are coming from the same community and in some way will benefit equally through sponsorships provided equally to the public school and the private school.

Public institutions are perceived as lethargic in service delivery due to the fact that bureaucracies are isolated from competitive pressures and responsiveness to consumers (Verger *et al.*, 2016). If service delivery is not up to standard, and if teachers are not doing their teaching jobs effectively, there is always the opportunity to blame the government, the regional office, the centralised HR functions or the service providers who did not deliver the stationery or text books – and it is commonly accepted without any repercussions. I agree with Verger *et al.* (2016:227) that government failures in service provision largely are construed by the public as being the result of these institutions inherently being inefficient and incapable of effectively promoting social welfare. I would further argue that this



situation is accepted as the norm by the citizenry of a country or in smaller communities. Bureaucracy is seen as the main obstacle to school effectiveness, since it imposes strict rules and guidelines that need to be followed to such an extent that it takes creativity and originality away from school principals to manage their schools productively. Principals are denied the discretion they need to carry out their roles, expertise and professional judgement.

I argue that private schools outperform public schools in many areas because they have the freedom to change and adjust to market demands. I have experienced that parents often make a choice about the school for their children based on whether the school is following the latest developments regarding teaching techniques and teaching aids. I further argue that the parents can easily source funding in the form of fundraisers and sponsorships for what they want in their children's schools. Public school parents, on the other hand, tend to wait and see what the government system or 'someone else' can donate to the school in the form of latest technologies and resources. A further argument is that this cannot only be contributed to a lack of willingness to investigate possibilities for revenue streams, but it could be that these parents simply do not have the skills to put in the extra effort for what is needed in education. In many cases (and it could be the majority), parents in public schools simply cannot afford any financial contribution towards their children's education. There are hardly any parents who would not like to contribute, but if they cannot, they simply cannot. The assertion exists that education systems are platforms for interest groups, especially teachers' unions and administrators – groups that are in control of public resources and who, in a large part, redirect policies and regulations to satisfy their own interest rather than those of the students (Chubb & Moe, 1991).

I have observed that an obstacle to initiating any additional revenue stream in public schools is the announcements being made by politicians and self-serving teacher unionists. Parents are told that the government will provide in all their needs regarding the education of their children. (The same promises are being made in terms of municipal service delivery and health.) This unfortunately leaves all efforts by the principal and school board fruitless, because parents would rather believe promises of goodwill and wait for them to materialise than to source the necessary funding themselves. Often the question is asked why parents must pay for education if the Government promised free education for all. The payment of examination fees, and for travelling for sport, cultural and other extramural activities are developing into contentious issues. Parents easily regard these additional fees as part of the 'free education' promised by the Government. When schools ask parents to contribute towards an educational or sports trip, parents argue that this is part of the child's education and, if the schools wish to fulfil its obligations towards the curriculum, it must do so with the funding and resources

supplied by the government. The attitude often is that if the school wishes to take a child away on a school trip, then the school must carry all the associated costs. This sometimes includes applications for travel documents. Parents refuse to or cannot make financial contributions.

The GRN professes, on the one hand, that everyone has free access to basic education, but on the other hand, in public announcements in national papers, the MoEAC says that parents must support schools financially and must take responsibility for the school's finances (Namibia Media Holdings, 2017). I have observed that there are parents who will plan and contribute in any way they can to make things happen and possible for their children. Unfortunately, these parents are often abused to a certain extent, as they are working at fundraisers and serving on committees to assist other learners as well. This, however, is a tendency seen in both public and private schools. I observed that voluntary contributions by parents are bigger and more in private schools than in public schools. I thus argue that this fact gives the private schools an advantage over public schools in developing additional revenue streams. Parents from private schools are generally better motivated, energised and connected. Business and service connections are crucial in developing additional revenue streams. While schools are competing for the same resources in the same towns, Oranjemund's business community seems to have the pleasant attitude of supporting both private and public-school fundraising initiatives. In fact, both schools support each other's fundraising activities by attendance, donations and buying raffle tickets.

I argue that schools in bigger centres would feel more pressure when competing for "customers", while in smaller towns in rural areas the situation might be different. The affordability of school fees will be the first factor to be considered when a private school wishes to operate in a small town, but another is what is on offer for that price? The return on investment would assist in making the choice for the parent easier, but if there is nothing that really attracts the "customers" to a school, why would parents pay for education at a private school when education is offered free at a public facility?

The same principle applies to public schools. In Windhoek, for instance, there are a number of well-known public schools performing very well in competing with private schools in their quality of education. The difference between these public schools is how the school management reacts to the demands of their "customers". This is indicative that the leadership of these public schools is actually empowered and supported by the government structures to perform well. They exercise enough freedom to offer something special in their delivery of education that other schools cannot offer. The question arises: why does this not apply in smaller towns across Namibia? One can speculate that the smaller towns do not necessarily attract effective leadership that is pro-active and "out-of-the-box"

thinkers who can still fly high within the limitations of the government policies and bureaucratic processes.

The sustainability of a private school would rely on the security of a dependable revenue stream. The population of Oranjemund needs to change from its status of being very dynamic to being more stationary. A number of factors are predicted to contribute to a change in ethnic structure and a decline in numbers of the population in Oranjemund (Hoadley *et al*, 2007).

- The majority of Namdeb employees are not based here permanently in the sense that they would stay in town if they were unemployed. They would resettle to either where they originated from or to where they are employed next.
- Employment opportunities are scarce outside of Namdeb and other businesses are reliant on Namdeb's good performance.
- A number of employees own properties in other regions of Namibia. Since property ownership is not a reality yet in Oranjemund, employees retiring from Namdeb are returning to their places of origin.
- Many employees have not been able to bring their families to Oranjemund; the town has never become their 'home'.
- There are not a large number of unemployed people living in Oranjemund seeking for employment opportunities. Accommodation is scarce and there currently are no informal settlements on the outskirts of Oranjemund.

In Oranjemund's case, the public school's physical structures have not been built yet. The public school exists in buildings 'borrowed' from the mine. In some instances, the classrooms are too small to accommodate a normal class of about 25 to 30 learners. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the situation in Namibia in general and in Oranjemund in particular can be compared to the situation studied by Nishimura and Yamano (2013:268) in Kenya. The Namibian President introduced the concept of Harambee in Namibia, as it was in Kenya in 2003. The Harambee concept means *pulling together* or *self-help* (Nishimura & Yamano, 2013).

Nishimura and Yamano (2013) indicate in their study that, based on gender inequalities, girls have a lower probability of attending a private school than boys and a higher probability of dropping out in the higher grades. With the introduction of free basic education in public schools, wealthy learners transfer to private schools, and two major international education goals – namely access to quality education and poverty eradication – may be affected negatively. It is thus very important to stay focused on the quality of education, rather than on access to education. Wealthy households can afford

to transfer learners elsewhere, but poor or low-income households cannot escape overcrowded schools. This, in turn, leads to the quality of education not being increased by the policy of free education, but rather it hampers the quality of education for the poor.

It is certainly very encouraging to see the Sustainable Development Goal 4 targets set out by UNESCO to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UNESCO, 2016). The focus is correctly spelled out in this document, but as Nishimura and Yamano correctly indicate, the governments of developing countries are rather focussing on access and numbers than on equity and quality.

In essence, this is something we need to guard against when seeking an education solution for this town. When establishing a private school, the focus of the public school should not only be there to cater for the masses. Both schools will play a role in the delivery of education, but on different levels. That is what is expected, but in reality the situation would be different and the endeavour should be not to let the quality of education down in the public school, but rather that the private school assist in achieving the delivery of good quality education in this rural setting.

A study done about financing primary education for all in Africa (Al-Samarrai, 2003), on the relationship between public education spending and education outcomes at primary school level in developing countries, revealed the following basic result: the development targets to provide education for all are articulated in quantity and the focus is not on the quality of education. It is easier to measure the number of learners with access to education than measuring the outcomes and how many actually complete the school curriculum. This, in a sense, is the feeling currently in our small rural town. The learner numbers are on the increase in the public school, since there is a perception that the public school is delivering better education than the average public school in Namibia – and it is ‘free’. The recent SATS results confirm this and indicate that the public school is doing well in the regional context. The local public school is on average performing 20 percent better in the SATS results than the regional average (MoEAC, 2017, 2018) However, the results are still trailing on average 10 percent behind the SATS results of the private school. This contributes to the drive for the demand for private school education – as long as parents can still afford to pay for it. It is further argued that an increase in spending on education and focusing on the provision of more resources will increase the education outcomes significantly.

As reflected in the study done by Al-Samarrai (2003), it is encouraging to see countries spending a vast amount of the annual budget on education. As seen in Namibia recently, this expenditure hinges

on the prevailing economic climate. The Namibian Government allocates the biggest part of the annual budget to education. It seems that it is still not enough and that the budget still does not cater for the country's educational needs. We see it in the cuts in funds for secondary education and teacher training. This leads to a drop in the quality of education in public schools.

The schools in Oranjemund and Lüderitz are relying heavily on financial support from Namdeb. For instance, the level of mathematics and science education on the higher level has been neglected due to the shortage of suitably qualified and experienced mathematics teachers in Lüderitz. This means that learners matriculating in Lüderitz cannot qualify for exemption to go to university (Hoadley, 2007). This is the opposite to the case in Oranjemund; Namdeb has been supporting the private school financially with lucrative salaries to be able to attract qualified teachers not only for maths and science, but all other subjects. This comes at a cost and it would be an enormous financial burden on parents wishing to continue with private education on the secondary level in any subject. This does not include offering subjects on the higher level. These subjects would come at an additional cost.

Taking into consideration the trend of spending less on secondary education (Al-Samarrai, 2003), it would make sound business sense for the community of Oranjemund to combine the efforts of both the private and the public sector in providing secondary education. The current private school is already providing secondary education, but this is offered against a cost to the Mine and the parents. The current public school is expanding from providing junior secondary education to providing senior secondary education. This situation certainly will lead to major challenges. Two examples are the availability of suitably qualified teachers willing to relocate to a very remote part of Namibia, and the availability of accommodation for teaching staff. Both the public and the private school struggle to attract and retain teachers in specialised fields. It would make sense to combine these efforts to be able to offer quality secondary education in Oranjemund. This, in turn, will assist in attracting and retaining the skilled labour needed in the established mining sector and the evolving business and mining-related support service to this remote community. Al-Samarrai's study mentions that Malawi, for instance, cannot cope and keep up with the necessary funding for secondary education. Uganda is also struggling, while Botswana seems to experience major successes in this regard. Donors are contributing towards the budget to be able to assist, but this has not achieved the desired educational outcomes. If a situation arises where assistance is offered for a partnership between public and private spending on education, it should be investigated and utilised to its fullest potential.

### 3.5 RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The study done by Tooley (2007) indicates that, in some cases in Lagos State, Nigeria, seventy five percent of learners are attending private schools. This fact cannot be compared with Namibia, since Tooley and Dixon (2005:4) point out that many of these private schools are not necessarily associated with excellence in education. Private schools in Namibia, as we know them, are actually catering for a small portion of the population that is able to afford more expensive school fees. To be able to attract learners and to charge these fees, private schools need to deliver on excellence in education.

Locally, the picture is slowly emerging that there is a difference between the private and the public schools in town. The recent SATS results provide us with this statistic, and one could argue that there are many valid reasons for this difference. This is where the selling point for the private school's existence can start: delivering on educational excellence. No matter at what cost, the private school will strive that the standard of education will be much higher than that of the public school.

An area of criticism levelled at public and private school education is the delivery on the outcomes of teaching English as a foreign language. Perhaps this is a topic for a different study, but English being taught by English teachers for whom English is usually their second or third language has a huge impact on the development of English as a medium of instruction (Cohen *et al*, 2007:288). This has an enormous influence on the outcomes of all subjects taught at any school.

Private schools are seen to be in a position where they could attract better and more suitably qualified teachers, but experience in other private schools indicates that all schools battle to attract English mother-tongue teachers who are able to teach English as a first or second language. The same argument goes for mathematics. Teacher trained as mathematics specialists are scarce and it will cost a lot of money to attract them to teach in rural areas. The argument is that it is easier for private schools to attract mathematics and science specialists, but this usually comes at a cost.

The local experience in the private school is that it is possible to attract well-qualified mathematicians, but they are failing due to a lack of teaching experience or effective teacher training. This fact is leading to a situation where the private school sees a huge turnover in the mathematics department. Mathematics teachers exiting tertiary education institutions usually go to the bigger towns in Namibia. The less-experienced, and less-able, teachers end up being very demotivated in rural towns.

Yet, where parents are still able to afford to pay for the private school fees, they select to put their children in the private school. This could be for a number of reasons, but it generally comes down to the fact that the private school appoints only qualified teachers, the teacher-learner ratio is still very low, and the Mine still subsidises the school fees by 70%, thus keeping school fees low for the parents. Arguably, this would mean that the parent is experiencing a massive return on an investment; the parent pays a third of the costs compared to what it cost the company to offer private school education. Parents are willing to pay their share of the school fees, even it is only a third, because they realise that, elsewhere, they would not be able to afford private school fees for their children.

The influx of parents seeking work in Oranjemund is causing the numbers of the public school to rise drastically. This is mainly because most of the job seekers are people aiming for the unskilled labour market. One can see a natural attrition from the private school to the public school, with parents from low-income jobs, mainly in the unskilled sector, selecting to take their children out of the private school to attend the public school.

### **3.6 LOW-FEE PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

Perhaps a look at low-fee private schools would be an option to consider. I agree with Brewer (2011:42) that it is assumed that there is a significant demand for low-fee private schooling among parents who are able and willing to pay for it, and that private schooling is a better solution than what is currently offered by government schools. My study thus pays attention to the abovementioned fact, since the true value proposition has not yet been established by both schools. Ann Bernstein (2014) points out that one of the assumptions about private vs. public schools is government schools on average perform worse than private schools. The result is that, when poor parents do have a choice, they send their children to private schools, preferably in their neighbourhoods (Bernstein, 2014). This was researched in Oranjemund to be able to establish the value proposition for parents.

After the independence of Namibia in 1990, more Namibian employees were included in the skilled labour structures of the Mine. The school numbers increased and, as a deterrent to keep lower-band employees out of the school, a small school fee was introduced.

On the other hand, when parents started private schools elsewhere in Namibia, they assessed the need whether the private school education should be limited to primary school education, or should it include secondary education as well? Costs were thus involved, and these costs determined the affordability of school fees. In these cases, the school fees determined the attraction and retention



factor for learners to be enrolled in these rural private schools. This very much depended on what was seen as affordable school fees – how much were these parents willing to pay for private school fees for a presumably better education? One would assume that these parents would want this kind of education for their children. Where it was not really affordable, would they be more willing to contribute in any other way regarding fundraising or delivering a service to the school in lieu of school fees (or at least a reduction therein)?

In the case of a school being started by parents, how much are they willing to pay for teachers' salaries? Costs or the budget would need to be calculated from this angle. An analysis of how many grades, how many subjects offered, how many classes per grade, etc. would have to be drawn up. A framework for the school would be required, and then the costs and staffing needs would have to be established from this point. Learner numbers would be a key factor to cover the costs. This would mean that the curriculum offered, entry requirements like the income of the parents and the scholastic performance of the learners would be factors to be considered.

In a case like Oranjemund, in relation to which an education solution for a small rural community is being investigated, we also have to pause at a certain point, and perhaps rightfully so early in the investigation, to ponder whether we are asking the right questions. One pertinent question would be: is there space for a private school in this town?

According to a study done in India (Bangay & Latham, 2013), focus was provided by the Indian government to provide access to education for the vast numbers of children entering primary education and, in doing so, they did not provide quality education. A large number of low-cost private schools entered the niche market to provide access to quality education, but unfortunately they also did not remain focused on the provision of quality education. Bangay and Latham (2013) correctly point out that the focus should be on the following questions when moving beyond the state vs. non-state providers of education in a community:

- Is it pedagogically sound? Are teachers making use of the latest trends in education? Do they show innovation in planning each lesson and are they bearing each learner in mind in doing so?
- Does it deliver meaningful learning? Do the learners learn more than in other schools? Do they have a better general knowledge than the average child does their age? Do they achieve better results in the SATS?
- Is it equitable? Are the parents satisfied with the value proposition? Are they getting a return on their investment? Are the children being taught to be more self-reliant and independent?



Are they developing into critical thinkers? Are the parents paying a price fair for their child's education?

- Is it scalable? Would the private school be filling a gap in educational needs? Would the private school be perceived as being there to fill a rightful place in the educational needs of the community? Is the private school contributing to the community in any way? Is there quality assurance?
- Is it financially viable? Private schools are heavily reliant on sustainable revenue streams. Apart from asking school fees from parents at an affordable rate, other funding is critically needed, especially in rural areas. Donations, grants or subsidies would assist private schools in rural areas to develop to their full potential. It would be very risky for a private school to rely only on funding through school fees from its parent base and their fundraising efforts.
- Is it sustainable? Any private school in a rural setting will only be sustainable as long as the revenue streams are healthy and do not dry up. Drought-stricken farming communities and rural mining activities affected by economic fluctuations are calculated risks private schools face when compiling their budget and their future development plans. Even the performance of the national government or the local authorities could have an adverse effect on the sustainability of a rural private school.

The paper by Bangay and Latham (2013) also poses the question whether there are ways that access to improved learning can be expanded in low-cost private schools at an affordable cost and in a sustainable manner while addressing equity and system improvement concerns through a public-private partnership. Private schools in a rural setting should be seen as complementing the education of learners in that area and also as providing parents with an alternative choice for education for their children, instead of being regarded as competition.

The above are among the possibilities that might work as providing an education solution in this small rural town if the provision of a private school becomes not viable – to see whether a partnership can be struck between a private initiative and the GRN in order to deliver quality education to this community. There currently are a few schools like this in Namibia, but they are primarily seen as public schools, although heavily supported by private initiatives. These partnerships are very successful and deliver good results. The national rankings of these schools are always amongst the top performers in Namibia. The paper by Bangay and Latham (2013) further points out that the tendency to consider schooling either as private or public is counterproductive. What we have seen so far is that there generally is collaboration between the private school and the public school in

Oranjemund. The schools are supporting each other in many ways, like sharing sport fields, transport, costumes and venues for performances.

It would not help if we are looking for an affordable funding model for a private school, but the school remains so small that it is not viable or sustainable to manage. This fine balance will have to be established. On the other hand, the public school cannot be so overcrowded that it hampers the delivery of quality education.

### 3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

During the literature review, I became acutely aware of how the situation regarding education in Oranjemund is comparable and similar to other cases elsewhere in the world. It was really exciting to realise that I am able to answer the research question. Asking the question again: Is there space for private school education in a small rural Namibian town? Two answers immediately come to mind, and it is “No, unless...” or it is “Yes, but...”.

The literature review explains the different options in operation elsewhere in the world and speaks to the two answers above. There are very expensive private schools, private schools for the upper to middle classes, and then there are private schools for the *poor*. It was alarming to note the different needs these private school gave for being established. It was satisfying to see that parents with the correct intentions initiated many schools, but there are horror stories of schools being opened to gain access to government funding in which the education of the children was neglected. This mainly is happening in extremely poor and rural areas, where supervision and governance are not up to standard.

I argue that it is extremely important for the private school parents in Oranjemund to realise that, if they would want private school education for their children, they would need to become involved and rely less on the Mine to sustain the school. The “penny needs to drop” that the paternal care and provision by the Mine of all social needs is slowly going to be withdrawn and that the community will have to stand on its own. The sooner parents become involved in the future education of their children, the better the chances would be for the private school to survive sustainably beyond diamond mining.

Options are available, but the Mine cannot set up a private school again, as was done in the past. The Mine is aiming to assist and support the parents' efforts to establish an independent private school. It needs to be registered and governed by the parents and members of the community.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS OF RELEVANT POLICIES AND DIRECTIVES

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will attempt to analyse the policies governing the processes at the private school and how these had an effect on the development of the households in the community. It is not that policies have no effects, they do; it is not that those effects are not significant, they are; it is not that those effects are not patterned, they are. In the analysis of complex issues – like policy – two theories are better than one, or to put it in another way, the complexity and scope of policy analysis – from an interest in the workings of the state to a concern with contexts of practice and the distributional outcomes of policy – precludes the possibility of successful single-theory explanations. What we need in policy analysis is a toolbox of diverse concepts and theories (Ball, 2006).

I argue that policies are interpreted differently depending on where one stands in relation to the policy and what one's personal circumstances or gains are. Stephen Ball (2006:43) says that the challenge is to analytically relate the ad hocery of the macro with the ad hocery of the micro, without losing sight of the systematic bases and effects of ad hoc social actions; to look for the iterations embedded within chaos.

Policies from 'above' are not the only constraints and influences upon institutional practice. One difficulty in discussing effects is that the specific and the general are often conflated. The general effects of policies become evident when specific aspects of change and specific sets of responses (within practice) are brought into relation with each other (Ball, 1993).

I agree with Stephen Ball (1993:11) that policies have their own momentum inside the state – purposes and intentions are re-worked and re-orientated over time. He adds that the problems faced by the state change over time. This is exactly what has happened with the policies implemented by Namdeb and the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC).

Policy as text could be seen as representations that are encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations), and decoded in complex ways (via actors' interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context) (Ball, 1993:11).

I can explain the interpretation and reinterpretation of policies in simple terms. The following example might suffice: After a match on a sports field, the supporters of the losing team would argue that it was a due to poor refereeing and the misinterpretation of the rules that their team lost and that it was a game not to remember. On the other hand, the supporters of the winning team would describe the game as a day to remember and that the interpretation of the rules by the referee was excellent.

While it is important to be aware of the fact that authors cannot control the meanings of their texts, policy authors make concerted efforts to assert such control by the means at their disposal to achieve a ‘correct’ reading, and some texts are formed by or have embedded in them the weight and measure or requirement. We need to understand those efforts and their effects on readers and to recognise the attention that readers pay to the writer’s context of production and communicative intent (Ball, 2006). I agree with Stephen Ball (2006:44) that it is crucial to recognise that the policies themselves, the texts, are not necessarily clear or close to complete. The texts are the product of compromise at various stages. I argue that policies are sometimes understood by a reader to justify a personal argument, while forgetting the intent and context of the purpose of the policy as a whole. Arguments often arise over the interpretation of one word or sentence taken out of context. Ball (2006:46) further mentions that policies do not normally tell you what to do; they create circumstances in which the range of options available for deciding what to do are narrowed or changed, or particular goals or outcomes are set. Ball (2006) further argues that the enactment of text relies on things like commitment, understanding, capability, resources, practical limitations, co-operation and (importantly) inter-textual compatibility.

I would argue the authors who write policies and laws write them from a governance perspective but, as in Oranjemund, the community is receiving the policy and law and interpreting it from their perspective. It would thus be wise to study the policies and describe the policy as seen from the authors’ side, but very importantly, how the policy is received by the receivers.

The current policies governing the private school were analysed and their influence is described in this chapter by bearing the research question in mind, namely whether there is **space** for a private school in Oranjemund. The most relevant policies that have a direct impact on the private school have been identified.

The following Namdeb policies were analysed:

- PO-AS-04 Accommodation Policy, PR-AS-26 Accommodation Policy
- PR-ED-01 Education Policy

From the MoEAC, the following were analysed:

- Education Act 16 (2001)
- Education Act 2018 (Final Draft)

It is important to remember the discussion about hermeneutics in point 2.4.2 in Chapter 2. Policies are written from the point of view developed by the author (Namdeb). In trying to communicate the meaning of the policy to the reader (Namdeb employee), the employer compiles the policy from its frame of reference and motivation. The employee understands and interprets the policy as aimed at him from a receiver's point of view.

As in all policy-related matters, the Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN) plays a role in the drafting, acceptance and implementation of the Namdeb policies and procedures. This should contribute to the harmonious introduction and application of policies. Each policy is discussed against this background. The influence it had on the development of the citizenry of the community of Oranjemund would thus become clearer. Each policy was written in conjunction with *procedures* that explain the implementation of the policy.

I examined and studied the policies influencing the decision-makers in this small society and attempt to explain how this community arrived at this point where the policies need to be revised. It is important to understand that past policies created today's challenges, and this needs to be addressed in line with the latest developments regarding the proclamation of Oranjemund as a normal Namibian town.

Policies are written to provide guidance for the implementation of rules and regulations governing processes. The interpretation of these policies unfortunately leaves big discrepancies in the application of each of them. This has led to many frustrations and delays in the implementation thereof.

Further, the reason for the creation of or change in a policy could be questionable. For instance, in relation to the creation of a GRN subsidy and the accompanying policy, the reason was very clear: to assist the private schools in providing education (of a better standard) to all Namibians who could afford private school fees (Permanent Secretary Namibia Ministry of Education, 2014:1). The private schools could apply these policies with the correct governing principles in place, as they felt fit. With the change in the GRN subsidy policy to provide *access* to private school education, the question

could immediately be raised – is this a way to ‘hijack’ places in private schools where the GRN could not provide more places in public schools due to financial constraints?

On Namdeb’s side, in the introduction of and subsequent changes to the conditions of employment regarding the housing policy of Namdeb they provide a clear reason for these actions. However, they failed to anticipate and address the social challenges these changes to these policies would bring. The employees who are the receivers of the changed policy interpreted the policy as they saw fit according to their benefit. The impact of these changes is discussed under each of the following headings below:

## **4.2 PO-AS-04 AND PR-AS-26 ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

Namdeb owns the vast majority of accommodation units in the town. Accommodation is regarded as an employee benefit (Property Administrator Manager, 2013). Namdeb has drawn up a comprehensive Accommodation Policy, clearly stipulating all conditions related to the need for accommodation not only for Namdeb employees, but also for non-Namdeb employees (Property Administrator Manager, 2015a). The PO-AS-04 Accommodation Policy covers the allocation of the different types of accommodation units to each employee according to the grading of the employees. The policy clearly defines the accommodation-related entitlement and eligibility of employees to specific categories and types of accommodation units.

Namdeb employees are graded according to the Patterson method of job evaluation, defining their benefits and remuneration packages (Senior Human Resources Manager, 2015). This means that the employees with lower gradings are accommodated in smaller units. If unmarried, the lower graded employees stay in one-bedroom accommodation units, each equipped with a bathroom, toilet and small kitchen. Against this, the higher graded employees are housed in bigger units (free-standing houses) with at least three bedrooms, a bathroom, toilet, kitchen and garage. Senior officials stay in bigger houses, where a pantry, entrance hall and larger lounge make up the benefits in the employee’s grading. Senior executive employees are housed in houses with more than three bedrooms, with a double garage and a heated swimming pool making up for the main difference according to the benefit scales.

The Accommodation Policy is accompanied by the procedures as described in PR-AS-26 Accommodation Policy (Property Administrator Manager, 2015a). Take note of the PR denoting the procedures, which indicates that this refers to the procedure related to a particular policy. This policy categorises the different housing units available for Namdeb employees and contractors. Contractors

are usually regarded as employees not employed by Namdeb, but employed by sub-contractors assisting in any other way with the production of diamonds.

As mentioned above, some units are not categorised with hosting rights. This means that the employee may not host any family or friends overnight in these units. No dependants are allowed to stay in these units, mainly because the units share communal bathrooms and are basically aimed at young and unmarried and single employees.

Namdeb management has made married accommodation units available for single-parent employees, which enables them to host their dependants in Oranjemund. Usually, the children of these parents attend the schools in town.

Employees not entitled to married accommodation because of the entitlement and benefits associated with the grading unfortunately have gone to great lengths to overcome the restrictions of the policy. Employees bring along their children, ranging from ages six to 18, regardless of whether they are allowed to host the children in the allocated units. This action can be understood against the background that the parent wants what is best for his children in terms of attending a good school in town. The sad side to this is that, in most cases, the parents are single and usually have a nanny looking after the children, mainly aged 13 years and lower. Children are being sent to school as early as 06:00 in the mornings because the parent is working shifts. Children were also left alone at night and are not supervised because the parents work night shifts. Together with this, children often would be sent to school with a dirty school uniform, no food or drink for break time, and no homework supervision and incomplete homework.

In extreme cases, children are locked up in single-bedroom units over weekends because the parent would be working shifts over the weekend. Parents also sneak their children into the units allocated to single men. Single parents entitled to a unit with enough bedrooms to host their children in some cases rent out the rooms for an additional income.

The policies of Namdeb are blamed for the social problems related to these circumstances, but the culprits are mainly parents who do not know where to go with their children and end up abusing the benefits they receive from Namdeb. Through the correct channels, these issues could be addressed and corrected. The company annually inspects all accommodation units. The date of these inspections is announced ahead of time in order for the employee to arrange that someone is at home when the Allied Services Team arrives. During these visits to Namdeb employees' houses, there would be no



trace of additional people staying in the unit. It is only if the neighbours or the children report to the school management that these issues are brought to light.

Prior to the public school's opening in 2014, the private school and its teachers coped with these social challenges as well as possible. All cases contravening the accommodation policy were reported and, in some cases, motivations were submitted for consideration to the Property Manager to make life easier for at least the children being housed in unfavourable circumstances. This fact alone was unfortunately also abused by the employees. The parent would bring the child to Oranjemund, knowing very well that there were restrictions in place and that he was not entitled to do so. These parents would approach the school to write a motivation to assist them to apply for better accommodation units. In some cases, Namdeb would oblige.

Where every care has been taken to accommodate Namdeb employees correctly, employees do not always follow the procedures or stipulations set out in the policy. For instance, employees who qualify for accommodation units with four bedrooms based on the size of their families do not use the bedrooms for their children, but rent these rooms out to non-Namdeb employees. This has come to light when the staff at the private school have followed up on learners' poor performance. The children would complain to the teachers that there are too many people staying in the house that they sleep on the floor in the lounge, that there is too much noise in the house and that they cannot do their homework.

Mostly, parents are accommodated suitably in units according to their entitlement categories, subject to the availability of vacant accommodation. Namdeb makes provision for families with many children. If employees are married and suitably qualified for the applicable category, four-bedroom units are allocated to them. All children per family must be legal dependants between the ages of newly born and 21 years. Legal dependants over the age of 21 with disabilities and/or special needs are also considered on merit (Property Administrator Manager, 2015b).

Divorced parents are taken into consideration in the Accommodation Policy. On finalisation of the divorce, the divorced employee without custody of the children may remain in his/her married accommodation to enable him/her to ensure visitation rights. The other parent, whether a Namdeb employee or not, may apply for an accommodation unit suitable to host the visiting children, pending the availability of such a unit.

Unnatural to any open society, but seen as normal to this mining community for many years, is that retired or retrenched employees do not stay behind in Oranjemund. The Accommodation Policy allows for retirees to stay behind and enter into a lease agreement with Namdeb. Most retirees leave town to return to the towns where they originally lived. The main reasons for this are not confirmed, but it is generally understood that retirees tend to leave because the Employment Policy of Namdeb specifies that 60 is the retirement age (Senior Human Resources Manager - Services, 2014). Employment opportunities are very scarce in Oranjemund. The same applies to retrenched employees; they tend to seek employment elsewhere in Namibia.

Another factor influencing the population numbers in Oranjemund is the availability of accommodation. As mentioned previously, most of the accommodation units in town belong to Namdeb. Units are leased to private entrepreneurs, depending on availability and provided that Namdeb's own housing needs are satisfied. The Accommodation Policy provides for non-Namdeb employees to lease accommodation units per contract. Some of the entrepreneurs have been leasing their houses from Namdeb for a very long time. This is mainly due to the fact that property in Oranjemund cannot be privately purchased.

As mentioned earlier, in section 1.4.1, Namdeb's change in the policy to address the abolishment of the migrant labour system offered different challenges. The main concern here was that the employees coming from the rural areas in the north of Namibia brought their children to Oranjemund, while the mothers were attending to subsistence farming operations back home. The only school at that stage, the private school, saw an increase in numbers. Along with the increase in numbers came the increase in social issues and learning problems. Children were often not ready for the grade in which they were supposed to be, and I observed that the task of the private school's Learner Support Department subsequently increased. The backlog not only addressed academic issues, but also the developmental growth milestones missed by these children. The staff reported that low muscle tone, low self-esteem, poor hygienic habits, low numerical and linguistic performance were found, and in many cases the use of English as a language was non-existent or very poor.

A very interesting development coinciding with the recent proclamation of Oranjemund as an "open" town is the Mine's expected 'life of mine' (LoM), which sees the Mine closing much earlier than expected in the format in which it is currently operating. With this looming closure in the future, Namdeb is currently offering all accommodation units for sale. The main aim of this is to allow company employees to own property in the independent town of Oranjemund. The units are being offered at municipality-valued prices, which means that the units should generally be affordable.

This has sparked wide interest in the properties there were put up for sale. Unfortunately, the single rooms, small flats and duplex units are not for sale at the moment. This means that the lower income employees cannot afford, even at a very low valuation, to purchase their Namdeb houses. When all expenses and the possible instalment on a home loan are taken into consideration, the school fees for the employees with children at the private school will become too expensive.

The outcome of this has been that the public school experienced a sudden increase in applications for the available places. Namdeb employees argue that, if their children could be accommodated in the public-school system for free, they would be able to afford home loan payments.

The argument could arise that these units are offered at a fairly reasonable price to the employees, but it needs to be taken into consideration that many employees own property outside Oranjemund. This is due to the fact that they were never allowed to purchase property in Oranjemund prior to town proclamation. Some employees were clever enough to spend their money outside Oranjemund, mainly in the areas from which they originate. Thus, even if the housing units in Oranjemund are offered at very low prices, some employees may still not be able to afford a second home loan.

Namdeb has already addressed the issue of accommodation as being a condition of employment by paying a housing allowance to the employees. This could mean that, with this additional allowance, employees might be able to afford to purchase property in Oranjemund, but paying for private school fees would put this just out of their reach.

One thing, though, is very clear. It is extremely urgent that the GRN builds the public school, or at least that it is allowed to expand by allowing them more space for more classrooms. Chapter 6 provides a broader discussion of this topic. It is trusted that an additional school will assist in determining the relevance of private school education in this town as part of the education solution. The relevance and sustainability of private school education is the crucial point being referred to in the research question, namely to establish whether *there is a place for a private school in this community*.

### **4.3 PR-ED-01 EDUCATION POLICY**

Namdeb's objective with the education policy was to provide eligibility and admission requirements that pertain to child care and the education of the children of employees working for the Mine (School

Principal, 2013). Employees with school-going children are entitled to subsidised schooling at the private school's pre-primary school and at the other campus for grades one to twelve (for their legal child/children). All other residents in Oranjemund not covered in the above paragraph are regarded as private parents (non-Namdeb employees). These parents pay fees as determined and stipulated annually by the company, supported by the School Management Committee (SMC) of the private school. The only exceptions that are subsidised by the company are clergymen, government employees and parastatal employees' legal child(ren). From 1 January 2014, this additional subsidy for clergymen, government employees and parastatal employees was withdrawn and fees were payable as stipulated for private children.

The reason for subsidising only Namdeb employees' children when it comes to school fees was that the parents now have a choice regarding schools in Oranjemund. The public school was opened in 2014 and non-Namdeb employees took their children to the GRN school. Some Namdeb employees, mainly in the lower income gradings, also took their children to the public school.

Namdeb normally contributes 70% of the costs towards the education of each child of Namdeb employees. All other parents are regarded as private parents and are required to pay 70% of their school fees, which effectively means that Namdeb covers 30% of the cost of non-Namdeb employees' school fees. It must be pointed out that the 30%:70% ratio usually fluctuates in favour of the parents, but serves as a guideline for budget purposes. The company aims to subsidise their employees with 70% of the costs, but it is currently standing at 72% as at the end of March 2019. This is thus regarded as a handsome subsidy and benefit to Namdeb employees.

To prevent the practice of "dumping" children with families where there are places in schools, and especially if the main costs are covered by a private company, Namdeb stipulates the following in their policy regarding the acceptance of learners from pre-primary up to grade twelve to qualify for the Namdeb subsidy:

- The application form must be fully completed and submitted.
- All supporting legal documentation is submitted (full birth certificates, custody and legal adoption papers).
- The parent/parents or legal guardian must reside in Oranjemund in order to have their child/children admitted to the school and to qualify for these rates.

Further to this, the school management will make sure that the accommodation status of each child is captured. Learners are closely monitored if parents are not residing in Namdeb housing, especially where parents are employed by other employers in the community.

The education policy currently stipulates that Grade 0 is not compulsory. This would need to be changed as a recommendation to Namdeb, since the GRN reintroduced pre-primary education as being compulsory (MoE, 2010). The Final Draft Education Act defines “primary education” as follows: the basic education [that] is provided from pre-primary level to the last grade of primary education (MoEAC, 2018).

It is understandable to regard the Education Policy as draconian and that it places many restrictions and requirements on parents wishing to have their children enrolled at the private school. The hermeneutics principle rings true here; according to the parents’ interpretation, there is a perception that Namdeb has put this policy in place to limit the learner numbers and that the school caters only for the elite in town. Namdeb employees with stepchildren from a previous marriage are required to submit legal adoption papers in order to qualify for the Namdeb subsidy. In some cases, the divorced parent does not want to allow the other parent to legally adopt their child/children just to qualify for a school fee subsidy. One can understand that these parents experience anxiety and that will be seen as writing their children off. This issue certainly would be one of the recommendations made to Namdeb to change the policy.

Namdeb employees from the lower income grades with many children (four and more) are experiencing angst because they cannot afford to send their children to the private school, even if they are all subsidised. The Education Policy does not make provision for parents to apply for discount based on the number of children. It could be argued that Namdeb already gives a discount of about 70% in relation to the full costs.

Private parents also receive a subsidy from Namdeb to allow their children to attend the private school, at about 30% of the school fees. There are private parents from lower income groups insisting that their children should be enrolled in the private school. Unfortunately, the school fees often fall into arrears and much trauma is experienced. In cases like this, parents are usually called in and counselled about ways to make sure that the school receives the school fees.

The Education Policy does not make provision for learners to be screened according to their abilities and the parents’ financial status. There are no entry tests that allow a child to be entered into the

private school. The school tests all children arriving from other schools to establish the level of the child's skills and development in the previous school. The private school management will then place the child in the grade in which the child was when he/she left the previous school. In cases where developmental milestones and competencies have not been reached, the private school management would advise the parents to either allow the child to repeat the previous grade, otherwise the parents are advised about remedial steps to be taken. Assistance would be needed at home to make sure that the child soon reaches all milestones and is able to perform optimally.

Keeping the study on hermeneutics in mind that meaning arises from and through dialogue. Namdeb drafted the Education Policy from their point of view without putting themselves in the place of the translator of the policy. Education provision is seen as very important and costs Namdeb millions every year. The main reason for continuing to support education is that the private school is one of the main attractions and retention factors of skilled labour in Oranjemund. Namdeb supports the education of its employees' children, and also of the support services and contractors who are supporting the production of diamonds. It therefore needs to make sure that the education benefit is going to those who need it for their employment in town. Family members staying elsewhere in Namibia tend to send their children to family in town where there are places available in the schools. This is more prevalent if that education has a reputation for being of a top quality. It is for this reason that there is a strict requirement regarding legal children or adopted children of Namdeb employees. Namdeb further supports education in town by supporting the GRN's efforts to establish a public school. Namdeb is making buildings available and assisting with the structural changes to and alterations for expansion at the temporary buildings.

#### **4.4 EDUCATION ACT 16 (2001)**

The MoEAC experienced a shortage of public-school space across Namibia with the increasing demand of learners enrolling for Grade One every year. The planning division of the MoEAC, through a lack of funding or capacity, has never been able to stay abreast of developments regarding education and to supply the demand for schools in the main urban areas, but very importantly, also not in the rural areas.

There are cases where schools were built in rural areas to swing a favourable political vote, but the schools are standing empty. They are either not really needed or are too far from any other utilities. Funds for the building of public schools soon dried up. The MoEAC made subsidies available for private schools to assist them with the appointment of teachers in their areas (Permanent Secretary

Namibia Ministry of Education, 2014). This was welcomed by the rural communities that established new private schools. They could become more sustainable in this way and this also meant that private school education was made more affordable for those parents in these areas who could not afford private school education in any other way.

To make private school education more accessible to the lower income families in the rural areas, the MoEAC adapted the policy governing the subsidies as follows: private schools were required to offer 'free' private school education to at least 10% of their learners in order to qualify for the GRN subsidy (Permanent Secretary Namibia Ministry of Education, 2014). This effectively meant that the GRN created more space for learners in the areas, with the difference being that the MoEAC was paying for their tuition. The drawback was that the private schools struggling to make ends meet in the rural areas could not utilise the subsidy for teacher salaries anymore. Many private schools opted out of the subsidy system for the simple reason that spaces were taken up by households that were funded by the GRN, while the other households saw an increase in their school fees.

**Aid to private schools** is stipulated as follows (The Democratic Republic of Namibia, 2001:37):

- The owner or controlling body of a private school may apply in writing to the Minister to receive aid in any form contemplated in subsection 49(5) of the Act.
- The Minister, subject to the form of aid a private school receives, must place a private school in a category specified in a notice made under section 49(2) of the Act, and inform the owner or controlling body of the school in writing of the school's category.
- The Minister provides aid to private schools at times and according to procedures determined by the Minister from time to time.

The **conditions for granting aid to private schools** are:

- The school provides an educational service or educational opportunity to learners that the Ministry cannot adequately provide, or fails to provide;
- The school will not use the aid to pay salaries for pre-primary school teachers, administrative or cleaning staff; and
- The school will not use the aid to pay salary for any additional teacher appointed by the owner or the controlling body of the school, or in respect of any administrative or supporting staff, in the case where the salaries of teachers are subsidised by the Minister.



Analysing the above, the question arises: what public policy is appropriate for assisting low-cost private schools, especially in rural areas? In a study done to answer a question like this (Heyneman & Stern, 2014), consideration was given to what public policy should contribute toward low-cost private schools, including a policy on development assistance agencies. One of the main recommendations in this study points out that, regardless of whether a child from a poor family attends non-government schools, they continue to be citizens; they may not be excluded from education because of limitations of their parents' income. This certainly is a profound statement and would be very valuable in developing a suitable basic education model for this rural Namibian town.

As stipulated in the section 1.4.5 (Statement of the Problem), the GRN subsidy towards private schools assisted in creating spaces for underprivileged learners in attend private schools. Ten percent of private school learners were supposed to benefit from this subsidy. Unfortunately, the MoEAC made a mistake in the calculations allotting the subsidy to private schools. The MoEAC sent out letters to all private schools declaring the forfeiture of the subsidy to recover the GRN's losses (Hoeseb, 2017). This had an immediate impact on the financial responsibilities of the private schools. The private school in Rosh Pinah, for instance, announced the immediate closure of its high school section and, with aid from the two mines in Rosh Pinah, was able to assist the Grade 10 and 12 learners to complete their studies and write their final examinations at the end of 2017. One private school in Lüderitz nearly closed its doors, but for the intervention of local businesses and industries operating in that town. In Oranjemund, the learners who attended the private school supported by the subsidy suddenly had to look for places in the public school.

This fiasco with the subsidy not being available to private schools meant that most private schools in Namibia relying on the subsidy effectively experienced a reduction in learner numbers. This happened to such an extent that private schools attending the 2018 annual private schools' sports events were not able to field full teams in team sport activities.

In a two-year, in-depth study done in India, Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria it was found that private schools play an important role in reaching the poor and satisfying their needs (Tooley, James & Dixon, 2005:1). This is contrary to many observers' beliefs that private school education only benefits the elite or middle classes and not the poor (Tooley and Dixon, 2005). All private school cases I am familiar with agrees with this statement. Through the GRN subsidy, rural private schools created more space for schooling and also provided opportunities to parents to be able to afford private school education for their children. I am referring here to small towns in the south of Namibia, like Oranjemund, Rosh Pinah, Lüderitz, Keetmanshoop and Aroab. The sudden withdrawal of the GRN



subsidy hit all these schools hard financially and also affected the families who were supported by the GRN subsidies.

The reasoning behind pausing the GRN subsidy to private schools could be understood against the poor financial performance of the GRN and against the idea that private schools in Namibia are well cared for through their revenue streams. One could argue that, in general and compared to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, Namibia is doing well in educating its school-going population. This could be substantiated when one looks at the findings of Tooley (2007), who show that non-registered private schools outnumber government schools in the countries covered by the study. It could be argued that there is hardly any confidence in these countries' education systems. Comparing this statistic with Namibia, the GRN is doing well if one takes into consideration the number of GRN schools in the country. Furthermore, many of the GRN schools receive funds for providing meals to the learners attending these schools on a daily basis.

This brings the argument back to the questions (and they might start sounding like a refrain): are private schools providing better quality education or not? What is the return on investment for the parent in sending the child to a private school? Do parents have enough confidence in the public-school system? If they have a choice between public and private education, which one would they choose?

#### **4.5 EDUCATION ACT 2018 (FINAL DRAFT)**

Analysing the Final Draft of the Education Act, it is immediately clear that the MoEAC has learnt lessons from past experiences. The Draft seems to be an improvement on the previous Act and I will highlight a few exciting aspects in terms of private school education.

From the onset, the Draft Act describes the right of any person to establish and maintain a private school, but there are clear requirements. The MoEAC has learnt from past experiences that some private schools in Namibia tried to operate under the radar of the Ministry and piggybacked on other private establishments. To curb this, the Draft Act explicitly forbids this and stresses that criminal charges will be laid against anyone trying to contravene this act (MoEAC, 2018:103).

To qualify for financial aid, the requirements and restrictions applied to private schools are drawn in line with what is required of the GRN schools. The MoEAC insists that, to be considered for GRN financial aid, private schools must abide by section 49 of the Draft Act. The powers of school boards

of private schools are seemingly restricted and have to be in line with MoEAC requirements. This also includes the development fund of a private school. In effect, this would mean that the MoEAC will have powers over the spending of aid money by private schools. In a sense, this is sound reasoning for governing purposes, but from experience it places a burden in terms of the expenditure of such funds. The aid formula used for private schools is not sufficient to cover the costs related to have a child 'sponsored' at a private school. The money budgeted for by the GRN for education expenditure per child is far less than what the private schools spend per child. This point has been discussed in section 1.4.5, where it was indicated what effect the misinterpretation by the MoEAC had on the existence of private schools.

Apart from school boards and finances, it further seems, if a private school should apply for financial assistance, the MoEAC plans to have a say in the following areas of the school's governance:

- Recruitment, transfer and dismissal of teachers.
- Regulation of the admission of learners to private schools.
- Learner and staff code of conduct.
- Establishment of school prefects and a learners' representative council.
- Admission age for learners.
- Admission criteria for learners.

The directive that private schools applying for GRN financial aid must have 10% of their learners covered under the aid has now been included in the Draft Act. There is a discrepancy between the amount of money it takes the MoEAC to educate a child at a GRN school compared to what a private school spends educating a child. Major private schools in Windhoek, Swakopmund and Walvis Bay will be able to accommodate 10% of their learners and subsidise them where the finances are not enough. Small private schools in other towns will not be able to assist with further costs when taking in the 10% of learners whose parents cannot contribute to the finances of the school.

I would argue that, in Oranjemund, it would be possible to allow the required 10% of learners to attend the private school with the aid of the GRN, but they would still need to be subsidised further by Namdeb or other businesses in the town. The costs associated with private school education are not the same as in the GRN schools.

## 4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

My main aim in this chapter was to point out how the policies have affected the local population of Oranjemund. A striking reason for much discontent and perceived unfairness was the interpretation of the policies by the policymakers, the policy implementers and the receivers of the policy. The interpretation of any policy is open to interpretation and the application thereof differs from person to person. I can emphasise the importance of Gadamer's hermeneutics here again and how it assists in understanding the text through the 'correct lens'. Meaning arises from and through dialogue; meaning is created and constructed through active engagement with text. Recommendations are made in Chapter 6 on how the policies should perhaps be understood, applied or changed in order to suit the current social needs of this community.

Analysing the effect of the policies on private school education and bearing the research question in mind, it is important to point the following out: the research question asks whether there is space for private school education in a Namibian rural town. Comparing the circumstances in Oranjemund with other rural communities in this education circuit, the same answer applies to all of them. It is going to be a challenge operating a private school depending only on the funds from parents without any form of subsidisation. Whether it is the GRN or private enterprise, private schools in small communities will struggle to be sustainable if they should rely on parents' contributions and the normal fundraising revenue streams.

Taking the local situation in Oranjemund into consideration, the policies governing private school education of both the MoEAC and Namdeb must be adapted. This statement refers strictly to the sustainability of private schools in small towns. Recommendations regarding the Namdeb policies will be submitted to the Namdeb management through the education solution project for consideration. Submission for consideration of changes to the private school policy to the GRN will be made to the Minister of Basic Education in Namibia through the private school representation on the Regional Education Forum.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Discussions between key stakeholders about the delinking of the private school from Namdeb have been an ongoing issue for a number of years. The names and dates have changed over time, but that has been a recurring issue for many years. Participating in interviews and discussions about the topic reinforces the narrative of the de-linking of the private school from Namdeb.

During the discussion in this chapter, it will become clear that the Mine has been considering for quite a long time to de-link the private school from its normal production activities. It is also clear that the importance of the private school as a retention and attraction factor for skilled labour has repeatedly proven to be a key consideration to embark on this process with the utmost care.

The first team from the Head Office of the MoEAC, then the Ministry of Education (MOE), arrived in Oranjemund in September 1998 to initiate discussions to establish a secondary school in the town. Members of the Regional Office in Keetmanshoop accompanied the delegation from Windhoek. It was at this stage that I started getting involved with the expansion of the private school (only offering primary school education) into a secondary school. In fact, twenty-years ago, on my arrival in Oranjemund as Deputy Principal: Head of Senior Primary in September 1998, the Principal at that time informed me that my task would be to assist in investigating these ideas. I must admit that, at that stage, my immediate thought was that the current conditions should stay as they were; the private school was offering excellent primary school education and the parents had a very wide range of high schools to choose from to send their children, either in the Western Province of South Africa or in Namibia.

For the next following ten years, the idea of establishing the secondary school was put on the back-burner, mainly because of the narrative that the GRN, through the MoEAC, was apprehensive about establishing a public school in an area where the Ministry of Mines and Energy through Namdeb was managing the mining licence. Since Namdeb employees were already accommodated with a privately-owned school, the GRN employees were a small minority working mainly for the Ministry of Mines and Energy, the Namibian Police, the Ministry of Environment, and Customs and Home Affairs. These GRN employees' children were regarded as necessary for the Mine's functions and

were initially fully subsidised as if they were Namdeb employees (paying about 30% of the costs of the school fees).

This chapter will show the intense and vast sphere of stakeholder engagement and the many participants involved to develop the narrative about the process of de-linking the private school from Namdeb. It would be important to establish whether there is a space for a private school in this town, as pointed out by the research question. It is imperative that a decision in this regard is made for the right purposes. Input from all participants is valuable in order to formulate a final outcome to truly establish the appetite for a private school.

## **5.2 MINISTERIAL VISITS**

The Education Ministers started showing an interest in visiting Oranjemund, but it was mainly for reasons related to upcoming elections. The Ministers and delegations would visit the school to acquaint themselves with it, and would then have discussions with the Regional Councillor about the future developments in public school education. Dr John Mutorwa visited the private school in 2004, but the main purpose of that visit was not relating to the expansion of education or de-linking of the private school from the Mine, but more of a political appearance.

Dr Louis Burger, previously the Deputy Permanent Secretary for Education with the GRN, was contracted in 2008 to submit a report on the viability of expanding the private school from offering only pre-primary and primary school education to a secondary school. His report was very clear on the need to take a number of factors into consideration before embarking on expanding the curriculum. Unfortunately, his advice was ignored because of internal pressure from the employees to develop a secondary school in Oranjemund. The secondary school started with the first Grade 8 learners in 2009.

The urgency of providing a public school was pressed home when the late Minister of the MoEAC, Dr Abraham Iyambo, personally visited Oranjemund on 22 October 2010 (School Principal, 2010). This was subsequent to Namdeb announcing to parents that the private school would be incorporated into a Section 21 Company Not for Gain, and that the private school would become completely independent of Namdeb.

This sparked the GRN to seriously look into the establishment of a public school, since a fully-fledged private school would be too expensive for most employees. There was an urgent need for the GRN

to step in, and the most significant visit took place in 2010. Dr Iyambo was very impressed with the work that was done by the private school and suggested that the school be considered for a special subsidy to assist Namdeb to continue with the school as is. Unfortunately, tragedy struck and Dr Iyambo unexpectedly passed away before this arrangement could be finalised. The special subsidy was ‘shelved’ and the private school had to comply with all requirements as stipulated in the GRN policy (4.2), since no written confirmation was received from the late Minister’s office. The idea was that, if Namdeb considered the introduction of a secondary phase, the GRN and Namdeb should go into a smart partnership. The GRN would assist financially through a special subsidy, but Namdeb would manage the governing processes, including remuneration and recruitment.

Dr Iyambo, however, left a legacy for Oranjemund, because soon after his untimely passing, in January 2015, the first public school in Oranjemund opened its doors.

The newly appointed Minister of Education, Dr David Namwandi, visited Oranjemund at the end of 2014 to familiarise himself with the education situation. Unfortunately, not much came of the promises of expansions to secondary education in the public school, since the construction of the school buildings had not yet started yet. No agreement could be reached between the MoEAC and Namdeb at such a short notice and in such a short time to combine the secondary education efforts of the private school and the public school. The learners in need of GRN education were accommodated in hostels in Keetmanshoop during 2015. The public school saw an expansion into junior secondary education in 2015, and it was no longer called a public primary school but a combined public school.

The current Minister of Education, Honourable Catrina Hans-Himarwa, visited Oranjemund as part of her national tour of all regions in Namibia on 8 March 2017. Time was set aside to meet with Namdeb management and the Town Transformation Team, principals of both schools and the school boards. At this meeting, and at a separate public meeting, the Minister informed the community that the public school would not be constructed soon due to financial constraints experienced by the GRN. The building of the long overdue public school was thus delayed until further notice. This information was not received well by the community. The public school is currently bursting at the seams in the temporary structures provided by Namdeb. There simply is no room for expansion.

The Namdeb Holdings Board mandated the Town Transformation Team (TTT) to call for an expression of interest (EOI) for the purchasing of the private school. Tender processes were followed and interested parties visited Oranjemund to view the private school facilities. Two parties represented private companies and one person represented the MoEAC. Unfortunately, no offers were submitted

to purchase the school buildings. The MoEAC did not submit any formal offer through its Regional Office, but indicated that there was some interest in the private school buildings.

A high-level meeting between the offices of the Namdeb CEO and the Minister of the MoEAC took place and interest was sparked in purchasing the private school property. It would fit into the plans of expanding the public school and would hopefully assist interested parents in making a decision to initiate and register a private school as a S21 company.

Below is a very short summary to show the timelines around the establishment of the private school, and later the GRN's interest in education in Oranjemund:

- 1945 – Private school established, very small school.
- 1952 – New private school buildings, very modern and equipped with science and language laboratories. High school learners transported by bus to Bitterfontein and from there by train to Cape Town.
- 1956 – High school learners airlifted from Oranjemund to their schools.
- 1998 – MoEAC (then MoE) visit: Dr West and delegation.
- 2004 – Minister of MoEAC visit: Min John Mutorwa.
- 2008 – Dr Louis B. Burger's report and findings.
- 2009 – The private school's secondary school commences.
- 2010 – Minister of MoEAC visit: Dr Abraham Iyambo.
- 2014 – The public school in Oranjemund is started.
- 2014 – Minister of MoEAC visit: Dr David Namwandi.
- 2016 – Public school expanded to junior secondary education.
- 2017 – Minister of MoEAC visit: Ms Katrina Hanse-Himarwa.
- 2018–2019 – Several ministerial delegations from the head office and regional office visit for consultations.

### **5.3 MoEAC PERMANENT SECRETARY AND TECHNICAL VISITS**

The visit of the current Minister of Education was preceded by a visit to Oranjemund by the Permanent Secretary (PS) of the MoEAC, Ms Sanet Steenkamp, on 31 October 2016. She focused mainly on the technical challenges facing the public school and the GRN teachers' accommodation issues. Focus and time were spent with Namdeb and TTT to continue with the relationship regarding the provision of temporary structures for the public school to expand. TTT explained Namdeb's plans for the private school for the future.

The PS visited Oranjemund a year later, from 3 to 5 October 2018, as a follow-up visit. This time it was a full delegation and included the Deputy Permanent Secretary, the Deputy Director of Buildings & Maintenance, the //Kharas Regional Director, the Education Inspector for the Namib Circuit, the Regional Education Planner and the principal of the public school. The visit focused on access for learners in 2018 and seeking ways to motivate the release of funding to assist with further temporary classrooms at the public school. Namdeb sensitised the delegation on Namdeb's plans to de-link the private school in the future. The delegation was informed about the education solution identified for this community by the TTT (Chapter Six).

#### **5.4 REGIONAL OFFICE INVOLVEMENT**

The importance of following bureaucratic protocols was discovered during the interactions with the MoEAC and other key stakeholders. Frustration with the delays in feedback from the GRN pressured the TTT to make direct contact with the stakeholder necessary for that particular feedback at that specific moment. The Regional Office expressed its frustration in this regard, because they felt "left out in the dark". With reassured assistance from the Regional Office and the Regional Director, pressure was put on the Head Office in Windhoek to keep this process in motion.

Minutes and Notes for the Record from the Regional Office were received and assisted greatly in providing information through the correct channels. The Regional Director followed up regularly on outstanding issues and setting up the necessary meetings with the PS and the Minister of the MoEAC.

#### **5.5 EDUCATION CONSULTANT**

In 2008, an education expert, Dr Louis B. Burger, was appointed to investigate the provision of education in Oranjemund, and specifically the viability of establishing a secondary school. Dr Burger presented a report pointing out that it would not be feasible to expand the private school to offer secondary school education. The main arguments were that there would not be enough learners to justify the expenses and the offering of a wide variety of subjects. He predicted huge costs involved in offering different subjects and to make the necessary facilities available. At that stage, the GRN indicated that it would build a secondary school in Rosh Pinah with hostels to accommodate the high school learners along the Orange River. This meant that parents in Oranjemund would in all likelihood send their children to Rosh Pinah to attend free secondary education there.



This scene has changed in the meantime, since the GRN built a secondary school in Rosh Pinah, offering Grades 8 to 12, but without a hostel facility. The focus therefore has changed significantly in the sense that there is an urgent need for secondary education as a free choice in Oranjemund. Parents who are not able to send their children to the private school for secondary education have no alternative but to send their children away to attend secondary schools elsewhere. Further to this, the Mine's financial position has changed drastically, and this initiated the recent changes that effect the future of the private school.

### 5.5.1 Scope

Namdeb management defined the scope of the education projects as a need to transform the private school from the currently Namdeb-owned school to a sustainable education facility offering quality basic education, independently funded and managed by an appropriately appointed governing structure, aligned with the local, regional and National Development Plans for basic education.

A consultancy group called *freedthinkers* was appointed to oversee and assist Namdeb with transforming the non-production-related activities of the Mine. In other words, Namdeb's quest was to focus only on the production of diamonds and not on managing a town with all its amenities. The cost of the town was not to be for the account of Namdeb in the future. The *freedthinkers* appointed an education consultant to assist me in formulating an education solution for Oranjemund. I have to point out that the project's objective was to find an education solution for Oranjemund and the possible de-linking of the private school from Namdeb. My research for the study would focus primarily on establishing whether there would be space for private school education in this community.

The education consultant and I focused on delivering an education solution for the community so that future education solutions simultaneously serve the core business needs of the Mine and the sustainability needs of the town. The education consultant worked very closely with me, being deployed as an Education Project Manager. This assisted me personally in finding balance to focus on the project while at the same time focusing on the transformation and the future of the private school. We struck a chord and worked very well together. It was important for us to establish a clear border between the needs of the project and the needs of the school. In the meantime, I had to keep my focus on the core of my study and made myself acutely aware of the overlaps between the project and the study. The need of the town was to have appropriate, sustainable education options

independent from mining and, critically, to provide services in keeping with the expected growth in population.

### **5.5.2 Inclusions**

The original scope of the project included the following:

- a) The geographic and demographic scopes are limited to Oranjemund and Rosh Pinah (Rosh Pinah mainly serving as a ‘doorstep study’).
- b) The scope of the education solution should focus mainly on Oranjemund and should consider the following, although the solution did not necessarily need to include all of the following services:
  - (i) ECD,
  - (ii) Pre-primary education,
  - (iii) Primary education, and
  - (iv) Secondary education.

### **5.5.3 Exclusions**

The scope of the project excluded social services provisioning, although consideration should be given to managing any negative social impact that the transition to a new school may have on the learners. This was to be dependent on the final solution selected.

### **5.5.4 Academic audit**

The looming de-linking process of the private school from the company brought its own challenges and soon delivered the first casualties. On the arrival of the education consultant, the insecurities, fear of change and low morale stood out as issues in serious need of attention.

The de-linking of the school was supposed to run parallel with the transformation of the private school into an independent and self-sustainable entity. The morale of the staff proved to be a key factor in maintaining the good reputation of the private school as a school of excellence. The education consultant suggested that an academic audit be conducted to establish whether the criticism levelled at the school’s performance was fair or not. The previous year’s Grade 12 results provided a topic for

discussion and, with the de-linking process in mind, the school endured some criticism that the focus was not on the delivery of excellence in education anymore.

The academic audit pointed out that the TTT underestimated the effect that the sudden removal of myself as principal would have on the morale and governance of the school. As was pointed out in the report, the private school management team staying behind was not well prepared for this enormous task. The announcement that I was to be removed from the school to pay fulltime attention to the de-linking process came as a bombshell to the staff.

I was given only three days to prepare the staff for internal role clarification and taking over certain responsibilities while I would be away from the school for approximately one year. Prior to this, the arrangement was that I was supposed to spend time on the project during the day as I saw fit in another office in Namdeb's main office building (MOB), while still overseeing the day-to-day management of the school. I was thus at school every morning for the staff brief, and the atmosphere was relaxed although apprehensive in the light of the looming challenges facing us as a team. In this way, I could give advice and direction daily and there still was a sense of calm at the school. The operational issues of the school were not affected negatively. This provided an opportunity for me to develop the two deputies with regards to their roles and delegate some of my operational responsibilities to them.

The effect of my immediate and complete removal from the school to pay fulltime attention to the project had severe repercussions. Below is a summary of the main examples of repercussions as listed by the education consultant:

- The Deputy Principal: Head of the Secondary School had no prior school management experience or experience in a combined school set-up. He was also not very familiar with the private school as he arrived in the second trimester of that year.
- The appointment of a temporary teacher as a Deputy Principal: Head of the Secondary School (Acting) who was not a member of the private school staff was not received well by the curriculum coordinators, since they were not considered for the acting position. The temporary Deputy Principal (Acting) had no experience of the Namibian curriculum and came from an IEB background.
- There was no time to adjust the timetable for the secondary school and, in some cases, teachers were overloaded with work, while others had more lessons for administrative purposes. Academic processes were disrupted even further and continuity was lost in some of the learning processes.

- The Deputy Principal: Head of the Primary School was new in this position and relied heavily on guidance. The other two members of the management team had insufficient experience in primary school management and were not able to assist him.

I must admit that this was one of the major, if not the biggest, confrontations I experienced in my career at the private school. The leadership of the TTT felt that it was best that I stay completely out of the day-to-day management of the school in order for me to focus on the project to de-link the school from the Mine. I felt that it was important for me to have a say in the appointments of the leadership, but my advice was ignored, which led to major frustrations at the beginning of this whole process.

The immediate effect on the staff was that a sense of despair, mistrust, anxiety and frustration set in. The management team left in charge of the school did not have the capacity in each of their roles to boost the confidence of the staff, or to excel in their performance as teachers. Literally no class visits were conducted during this period, and many governance systems were dropped or neglected. Confidence in the school to maintain its brand of excellence was key to the transformation process for success and to attract parents to continue enrolling their children at the private school. Other important issues were pointed out in the academic audit report, including the following:

- The subject levels of some of the learners were too high and it was recommended that they change their levels from higher level (HL) to ordinary level (OL), especially in cases where the required pass marks were not achieved.
- Mathematics was behind schedule for preparation of the Grade 12 learners for their end-of-year external examination (2017), and all efforts should be made to have learners entered on levels according to their abilities or potential.
- Halt the technology drive until a clear process for the introduction of technology had been worked out.
- The report emphasised that students must do more than just listen, and that activities must be engaging and that they should be helped to develop problem-solving skills. Active learning engages learners in doing things, and in thinking about the things they are doing.
- The academic standard of a school depends on what happens in the classroom. What happens in the classroom depends on the teacher. Even though the correct qualifications of all the teachers are very important, their mindsets are equally important. Bearing in mind that each teacher has a different approach to teaching and academic management, it is essential for each of them to have very clear guidelines of what is expected of them.

- Teaching methods differ from section to section. In *junior primary*, the teachers have an excellent idea of what is expected of them and cooperation between the grade teachers is very good. They clearly have a passion for teaching. Teaching is mainly *child centred*.

In *senior primary*, the teachers are knowledgeable about the academic requirements of the subjects they teach. Cooperation between teachers, with regard to academic planning, is limited. The teaching method is mostly *teacher centred*.

In the *secondary school*, the teachers work as individuals. Academic comradery is absent. The teaching method is mostly *teacher centred*.

The school subsequently performed poor against the national rankings at the end of 2017, because some of the subject level recommendations were ignored. The outcry after these results caused Namdeb to transfer me back to the school immediately, while I remained involved in the education project. Calm and a higher morale returned, which made it easier for the TTT to address the de-linking process of the private school without creating an atmosphere of anxiety and mistrust.

#### **5.5.5 Recommendations by education consultant**

Focusing on the initial reason for including the services of an education consultant, work continued on the education solution sought for this community. It is also essential to mention that the education consultant's recommendations were made against the background of the scope presented to him at that stage of the process. The recommendations in Chapter Six presented as part of the study incorporate these early recommendations, but the scene changed significantly with the announcement of the consideration to close the Mine at the end of 2020.

The preferred recommendation is to transfer the primary school section of the private school into a Section 21 company. The secondary section could be transformed into a public-private partnership to serve both primary schools for secondary education. This unfortunately is restricted to the ownership of the infrastructure, which needs to be cleared up with the MoEAC, and a final decision from the Mine is needed regarding the future of the private school buildings. It does, however, not change the recommendation.

The abovementioned recommendation would ensure that parents have a choice for their educational needs in Oranjemund:

- On primary school level, parents will have a choice between public or private education.

- On secondary level, parents will have the assurance of a wider range of subject choices for their children with support from local businesses.

The attraction and retention of skilled labour to the economic sectors of Oranjemund will always form part of the education strategy. All schools will have to be very creative in offering education that will satisfy the parents' needs.

The recommendations for each school depend heavily on the confirmation of learner numbers. Alternative and additional teaching spaces may be provided on a temporary basis so that the public school can expand. It is expected that the learner numbers at the public school would outgrow the learner numbers at the private school. The recommendations for each school are summarised as follows:

#### Public school

- Primary school education only: Grade 0 to 7.
- No school fees.
- Temporary classes should be suitable for the short term.
- Medium to long term: The public school moves into the primary school buildings of the private school, including the administration block (this unfortunately can only be done with at least a lease agreement in place between Namdeb and the MoEAC).

#### A secondary school for Oranjemund

- Grades 8 to 11 (2019 - First Grade 11 exit examination) .
- Grade 12 higher level (HL) subjects.
- School fees based on the difference between what MoEAC offers and what is needed to supplement additional subjects for a wider range of choices and Grade 12 HL subjects.
- Current classrooms in private school buildings utilised for the secondary school phase, together with all Grade 1 classrooms, which should suffice for classroom space for the secondary school. The music block to be converted into an administration block for the secondary school. Own intercom and bell system to be connected.
- Short term: This arrangement can be kickstarted at any time after the finances/school fees have been confirmed. Usage of the school hall and library could be arranged with the private school management, depending on whom the buildings would belong to.

### The private school

- Offering Grade 0 to 7. Possibly include ECD.
- School fees to be determined by newly established S21 school board in accordance with financial support from local business community.
- Current classroom space is suitable. Grade 1 and 2 move into the current Gr 2 and 3 blocks. Pre-primary to move into the current Grade 0 classrooms. All other classrooms will be utilised for the rest of the junior and senior primary classes.

### Additional infrastructure

- The private school swimming pool: The future ownership and maintenance cost to be determined. This facility will in all likelihood be transferred to an independent club and supported by Namdeb for the time being.
- School buses and bus shed: Possible sharing to be determined by the schools.

### Immediate next steps

- Approval by the Namdeb Board
  - This is going to be crucial before any changes in classroom spaces can be affected.
  - Proper governance and contracts to be drawn up between the legal parties.
- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
  - Draw up a proposal for the MoEAC listing the three schools.
  - Meeting request with the PS and a technical team (budget, staffing, etc.).
- Governance and curriculum for the private school
  - Confirm how the governing body will be constructed.
  - Confirm which curriculum will be followed.
- Administrative and teaching positions
  - Administrative positions for future Oranjemund Secondary School to be identified, advertised and filled as soon as possible, in consultation with and by the MoEAC.
  - Administrative and teaching positions to be identified for the private primary school (Grade 0 to 7).
- Infrastructure and assets

Ownership to be determined as soon as possible, but in the meantime, the following:

- Public school remains in temporary structures.
  - The private primary school section remains in current classes: plan to move Grade 1 into current Gr 2/3 block for 2018.
  - The private secondary school section to expand into Grade 1 classes in 2018.
  - The private school swimming pool is in the 2018 budget. Future of the pool to be determined after that year.
  - The private school transport is in the budget for 2018. This raises the school fees and should be considered for downsizing (55-seater bus exchanged for two Quantums).
- Planning for 2018 and 2019
    - Secondary school: Staffing to be streamlined to eliminate the huge number of administrative lessons allocated to HS staff. At least 46 out of 56 would make a huge difference in costs.
    - The number of subject choices offered: fewer than 10 learners – class/subject not to continue.
    - Primary school: Teacher-learner ratio to be evaluated for junior and senior primary.
    - Primary school: Administrative lessons limited to a maximum of five.
    - MoEAC requested that excess private school staff receive preferential treatment in consideration for vacancies at the public school (excellent and experienced teachers, accommodation and relocating costs limited).

## 5.7 PARENTS

After the establishment of the secondary school at the private school in 2009, it was noticed that senior Mine officials, and even private school teachers, still continued to send their children to attend schools outside Oranjemund – in the Western Cape province in South Africa or elsewhere in Namibia. There was a drainage of the well-performing learners taken up by other secondary schools and we wanted to establish what was to be done to have a turn-around with this tendency. We asked ourselves the question and decided that perhaps we should go to the source of the information; the parents and the learners.

We asked them: “What was good at the private school?” Regular meetings and updates were presented to the parents about the Company’s intention to de-link the school. This was done through different means, for instance at parent meetings, written communication to parents, interaction and



involvement of the School Management Committee (SMC) and the Parent-Teachers-Association (PTA).

The internal transformation processes running concurrently with the de-linking process was considered as equally important. An effort was made to include parents who have sent their children away to attend secondary schools elsewhere and who didn't have children in town anymore. It was important to understand what the parents' needs were and what it would take to change their minds to keep their children in Oranjemund. Importantly for my study; the research question remains – is there space for a private school in this rural town?

During an interactive session with parents and learners, the many positive points about the private school were listed and could be summarised as follows:

- The primary school offers a very good foundation for education. The learners are eagerly accepted at any high school of their choice when they apply for places at schools outside Oranjemund.
- The small-town-environment is conducive for raising children with a solid background and a very positive value system. The expression “it takes a village to raise a child” was mentioned to describe how everyone in Oranjemund knows everyone else. Other parents easily recognise children and any wrongdoing is subsequently reported. Children are safe in this town. Traffic still respects pedestrian crossings; it is safe for children to cycle to school and play in the parks. The children are usually very humble, well-mannered and polite.
- Because of the cultural diversity of Oranjemund, children grow up respecting other cultures and traditions. Cultural participation is limited but good quality activities are presented away from the traditional homesteads.
- Parents expressed their satisfaction with the fact that they can be personally involved with the school, their children and the teachers. The small learner-teacher ratio ensures contact between the teacher and each learner. Transporting children to school, if necessary, is not expensive and does not include being stuck in traffic every day. Every need of the child is in close proximity.
- The parents are satisfied with the number of activities offered at the private school and the effort the school makes to make sure that the learners are exposed to as much as possible to other schools and activities outside Oranjemund. The number of trips and tours arranged for the children is appreciated, but the amount of contact days missed with teaching is a matter of concern. Where possible, the private school and the public school combine efforts on educational and sport excursions.

- With all the mining operations and the subsequent services associated with the production of diamonds, the vast numbers of jobs and skills are offering an excellent opportunity for the learners to do job shadowing.
- The financial support from Namdeb and the rest of the business community is recognised as a very positive point in making sure that the costs of the private school to parents are minimised. For instance, Namdeb sponsored the private school with three school buses able to transport a hundred learners. The local SPAR and other shops sponsor regularly and handsomely to assist with fundraising efforts, prize-giving ceremonies and entrepreneurial days.
- “Why would parents send their children away?” When asked what would cause the parents to consider taking their children to another high school outside Oranjemund, they described the following “deal breakers” as reasons to do so:
  - Peer pressure experienced at the private school was mentioned as an issue, but could be an experience at any other school. It was not clear whether the parents raised this as an issue because of how it was addressed or whether it was an individual experience.
  - The lack of exposure for learners to league matches contributes to poor performances on the sport fields and that the children are not regarded as “game fit”. The same applies to the children wishing to take music. At the private school, recorder and piano are the only options offered, while schools elsewhere could offer a wider variety of music instruments to be mastered.
- Parents regarded the lack of good performances by the high school in the national rankings as a reason for sending their children away to get them academically acquainted to the South African Education system so that the learners could adapt easier to tertiary studies. The wider variety of subjects offered in SA schools, a possible third language and learning support were also cited as a need by the parents. They felt that the private school has not kept abreast with technology developments and is exposing the learners only to computers.
- Parents expressed that their children are growing up in a very protected environment and that it is a shock for them to experience society outside Oranjemund.

## **5.8 PRIVATE SCHOOL STAFF**

It is important to point out that the internal and external transformation processes are recognised as influencing the staff. The sudden change in the Management of the school had an adverse effect on the morale of the staff and manifested in many areas. Poor performance in delivery and execution of

lessons were reported. The staff was anxious about their future and without proper support and supervision allowed some governing and administration processes to fall away.

### 5.8.1 Benchmarking

To address some of the concerns regarding the stagnation of the school's academic programme, a benchmarking trip to Cape Town was organised. The main purpose of this exercise was to compare the private school to truly independent schools, to seek similarities and to seek a purpose for the existence of a private school. Twelve private schools staff members visited three independent schools, namely Cedar House in Kenilworth, Bridge House in Franschhoek and Somerset College in Somerset West.

The recommendations taken away from this benchmark visit was briefly as follows:

- Governance:  
Appoint Alumni and parents with vested interest and long history with the school as members of S21, ensuring that the private school legacy is protected and continues in Oranjemund.
- Finance:
  - Implement a non-refundable deposit on admission to pre-primary, primary and secondary school for investment in infrastructure improvements, upgrades and other working capital requirements (vehicles, computer equipment, furniture, etc.).
  - Provide parents with a tax certificate for tax deduction for donations to a S21 company.
  - Calculate an overhead absorption rate for pre-primary, junior primary, senior primary and secondary school in order to determine school fees for the different school levels, i.e. charging a higher school fee for grades that absorb more cost than others do.
  - Implement a mark-up on school fees for senior grades; this would assist in obtaining specialised teachers and equipment.
  - Implement charging parents a separate annual admin fee for camps, SMS notifications, Wi-Fi connections, etc. (i.e. the “nice-to-haves”).
  - Implement attractive discounts for parents that pay school fees upfront, whether annual or trimester. This would assist with cash flow for the school.
  - Implement the issuing of debentures to parents. A parent will pay a lump sum upfront for a debenture and will be fully refunded the capital amount when their child leaves school. Interest would be in the form of annual discounts on school fees. This would provide the school with immediate capital resources and provide parent with funds for tertiary education.

- Create a private school alumni database for networking and fundraising.
- Obtain a loan facility with a financial institution for infrastructure improvements and upgrades, and use school property as collateral.

General:

- Implement admissions criteria for learners and their parents to ensure the school admits top performers with credible parents to avoid defaults in paying school fees.
- Invest in boarding facilities to attract learners from outside, thereby increasing capacity of the school without dependency or reliance on Namdeb.
- Consider employment versus outsourcing non-academic services such as gardening and maintenance of property, payroll, etc.

### **5.8.2 Conditions of employment and termination process**

As mentioned earlier, the main concern of the teachers was recognised around their future employment at the private school. It is important that a clear and transparent engagement plan to be drawn up and regular feedback given to the staff. The narrative constructed must remain the same, but details as matters develop must be divulged timeously.

Small towns are known for the fast spreading of rumours and gossip. Typical of small towns, the “experts” out there were told by “someone” all sorts of details about the staff’s future. This created a lot of anxiety, mistrust and frustration amongst the staff. To overcome this, the Mine created a communication channel, which exists straight between the employee and the employer. This means that during engagement sessions with the staff, the top management of the Mine would address the staff directly on employment and termination issues. An encouraging fact is that the CEO of Namdeb Holdings, The Chief Operations Officer of Namdeb and the Head of Namdeb Human Resources committed themselves in personally addressing the staff. This had an immediate positive effect in the morale and work-output of the staff. The staff was given opportunities to raise their concerns regularly at engagement sessions and mainly revolved around their personal fears/expectations regarding remuneration, employment contracts, medical aid and housing benefits.

The positive effects of the mutual discussions were noticeable on the staff and their understanding of the issues regarding the termination processes. The surplus staff at the private school would be included in the next voluntary separation exercise of the Company. The details of this are discussed in Chapter Six.

## 5.9 NAMDEB MANAGEMENT

Namdeb management, which reports to the Namdeb Board, is duly involved with the decision processes with town transformation. Regular contact sessions and interaction on formal and informal platforms create opportunities for internal alignment regarding the education solution for Oranjemund. Namdeb management understands the reason for establishing the need and support for a private school in this town, taking the looming Life of Mine (LoM) in consideration.

It was through healthy and inclusive discussions that a narrative starting to develop which was accepted by all the stakeholders who were involved in the processes. The following education solution was presented to the board and was approved:

- Private primary school education: Pre-primary - Gr 12.
- Public primary school education: Gr 0 - 7.
- GRN & Namdeb plan Secondary School transfer to GRN: Public secondary school Gr 8 – 12.
- The private primary school de-links at the end of LOM from Namdeb.

During a presentation to the Namdeb Holdings Board, the Board expressed the view that the school be offered for sale and that the required tender processes should commence. Namdeb went out on an Expression of Interest (EOI) to sell the school. Private entities were contacted and presented with numbers and details prior to this, but they indicated that they were not interested. The EOI and the subsequent tender process did not deliver any serious buyers or offers to purchase the school.

As mentioned in Chapter 5 and in Chapter 6, the sudden interest in the GRN to purchase the school put a different spin on the planning for the future of education in Oranjemund. Namdeb management actively got involved in high-level contact with the MoEAC. These high-level discussions concluded with a proposal that the secondary school phase of the private school be donated to the GRN. All details still need to be cleared, but it would basically mean that the secondary phase be transferred to the GRN at the end of 2019 “lock, stock and barrel”. The finer details related to the private school staff’s termination processes and the MoEAC’s recruitment processes are to be finalised.

Namdeb management is acutely aware of the importance of the private school to the community and its employees. Every consideration is taken in account not to upset the community and the employees in any of the decisions. Every effort is made to clearly communicate the intentions and processes.

## 5.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Since the first talks started many years ago about the community's demands to have their children educated in a secondary school in Oranjemund, key stakeholders were involved. The success of the education transformation in Oranjemund depends on the successful identification of an education solution for the community. All stakeholders seem to understand and is pleased with the outcomes of the Town Transformation Team. As for my study and subsequent research; I have developed the same angle in developing a narrative with the owner of the private school and the parents. Presenting the research question and asking whether there is a place for private school education on this town, the same refrain started to appear and is being understood; the private school has a place in this community, but will only survive if it is supported by Namdeb or the business community in this corner of Namibia. The private school will otherwise not be sustainable.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

Namdeb, the mining license holder in the Sperrgebiet, assumed the responsibility of providing education to its employees' children, specifically to attract and retain skilled labour to this remote part of Namibia. For many years, the status quo was maintained and the private school developed a brand of excellence.

The production of diamonds came at a cost per ton and diamonds were easy to mine during the earlier years. The main costs associated with getting to the ore body was the stripping, which meant removing layers of overburden, which mainly consisted of sand. Compared to the historical days of diamond mining, the scene changed to a more difficult and costly mining method. With the continued challenge of the economy and the price of diamonds, it became more urgent to re-engineer the mining model at Oranjemund.

All non-mining-related costs were to be cut so that the company could focus only on the production of diamonds. An instruction was issued that the non-diamond production costs be de-linked from the company. It is necessary, however, to understand the complexities in which the Mine finds itself. I will attempt to discuss the findings arising from conducting a literature review, analysing policies, and examining the narratives derived from interviews.

#### **6.2 FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

I was not only pleasantly surprised by how much information was available on the topic in the selected literature, but also that there were so many situations in the world similar to the situation in my study. It was easy to select the five main categories discussed under this sub-heading. The literature certainly added credibility to my findings and provided me with an authoritative voice.

##### **6.2.1 Choices for parents**

In my study, I found that since the parents are offered choices regarding primary and secondary education in town, it would be a contributing factor in stabilising the dynamics of the town. If there are good schools to select from, employees or prospective investors might consider staying or investing in the town. This, in turn, will develop the citizenry's confidence in the town and would attract much-needed skilled labour and investors.

As in so many cases elsewhere in Namibia where parents initiated private schools (for whatever reason or purpose), the fact remains that the parents identified the need for private or alternative school education. These parents lived in or around the communities where schools were needed. Thus, the need for these private schools differed completely from why the Mine at Oranjemund developed a private school.

The natural competition derived from the choice between a public school and a private school would have a very positive spin-off. I argue that the schools will try to compete with each other not only for results, but also for learners, parents, sponsors/investors and other much-needed resources. Verger *et al.* (2016:224) point out in a comparative review that the World Bank report on public private partnerships states: "The idea is that parents choose the best school for their children on the grounds of quality, which in turn puts pressure on schools to compete to attract students and achieve better academic results at lower cost." According to the same report, the provision of a choice and exit opportunities may benefit the less privileged and marginalised members of a community (Verger *et al.*, 2016). It is also important to bear in mind that international research on school choice, according to Verger *et al.* (2016:234), shows that families' preferences tend to vary according to their socio-economic status (SES). Academic performance is valued more by families with a higher SES. In contrast, families with a lower SES are less responsive to educational performance.

Verger *et al.* (2016) explain the influence of quasi-markets on the Chilean education system. My study correlates with that of Verger *et al.* in the sense that, on the micro-level, the education niche market in Oranjemund is similar to the Chilean case. The Oranjemund experience is that parents are more involved in the education of their children. The main contributing factor is that it is a very small community and everyone basically knows everyone else. The biggest obstacle, however, is the parents' lack of income or lower socio-economic status; the parents do not have a wider choice between the two schools on offer: it is either public or private school education.

As in any other town in Namibia, the parents' choices regarding their children's education in Oranjemund revolves around the following basic factors:



- 'Free' education or having to pay school fees.
- The affordability of the school fees in the case of the private school.
- The perceived quality of education offered at both schools.
- The return on investment, regardless of whether education is free or comes at a financial premium.
- The additional costs associated with the extramural activities presented at both schools. This includes the extra costs involved in purchasing the school uniform, sportswear and winter clothing.
- Distance to walk to the school and the affordability of public transport, essentially taxis.
- Values taught at the school.
- Exposure to the broader curriculum, educational trips and expansion of the learning content, internet access and access to available technologies.
- Religious restrictions or practices, inclusions and exclusions.
- Disciplinary and fairness issues related to learner behaviour.
- Security for the learners and anti-bullying mechanisms in the school.
- Professional training and conduct of teachers.
- Afternoon extra classes, remedial assistance and interventions in the case of learning problems.
- Inclusiveness regarding disabled learners in mainstream activities.
- Selection of subject choices on offer.
- The size of the classes – learner number per class – are the classes overcrowded?
- Co-ed education, with an emphasis on respect for the opposite sex.
- Safety of the child in class, on the playground, on school trips and excursions, at sport practices and games, etc.

Verger *et al.* (2016) mention that studies in Chilean schools indicate that 87% of parents consider the composition of the school to be extremely important. It is important for them that their children have contact with other children coming from the same socio-economic backgrounds as their own. The quality of education seems to be better in smaller schools; classes are not overcrowded and teachers have time to pay additional time and attention to learners struggling at school.

I agree with the findings in the paragraph above, since the insights I gained through my study showed that, in offering an education solution for the community of Oranjemund, the two schools will have to work together very closely in terms of the subject choices offered at the schools. The management

of the schools have to be very aware of the choices they offer to parents in terms of their needs. There is a need for both schools in this town; some parents cannot afford to pay school fees, but all parents need excellent educational opportunities for their children. The public school will expand rapidly and the private school will shrink in size until both settle into what the market demands and can afford. This might take some time, but in the end it will be accepted that there are two choices for parents.

Further choices for parents are the following:

- A choice of early childhood education: Oranjemund Private School Pre-Primary School and a number of day-care centres and crèches.
- Free public education from Grade 0 to 7.
- Private primary school education from Grade 0 to 7.
- Free secondary school education from Grade 8 to 11, offering Grade 12 on extended level from 2010, a wider range of subject choices and more cost-effective usage of resources.

### **6.2.2 Sustainability**

I found in my study that there are mainly two key concepts determining the space for a private school in this community:

- The ‘appetite’ of the parents for private school education for their children, and
- The importance of Namdeb financially supporting the private school.

Everything the parents are planning for the school, together with what the Mine has in mind, must focus on whether a private school will be sustainable in this community. The school has been funded and supported by the Mine since its inception in 1952. Since then, the funding mainly came from the Mine, and the school was able to survive and was viewed as sustainable in the sense that it was surviving on a subsidy from Namdeb.

I cannot see this school continuing as a private concern wholly funded by parents. The reason for this is simple and will be explained further under the following sub-headings. There are too few parents who are able to pay the school fees needed to manage a school like this. Namdeb is subsidising schooling at over 70% of the cost per child, against the contribution of the parents at just under 30%. If the Mine would cease to exist, the school will cease to exist. The case of Rosh Pinah, as mentioned previously, serves as an example. If the school fees are not enough to sustain the school, the quality of education, and the attraction and retention of experienced and well-trained staff will be difficult to maintain.

Options for a sustainable education solution for Oranjemund have been identified, and the best solution has been presented to the necessary key stakeholders. As pointed out in the Introduction, Namdeb created a private school to fulfil a role as an attraction and retention facilitator for the skilled workforce to extract diamonds profitably from the desert environment. Parents became used to the fact that, together with all the other benefits, the school was provided by the Mine for the community. The parents did not arrive in the town and then demand that their children be educated in a private school environment – the school was already established and provided for.

School fees were fairly irrelevant in the beginning of the private school. Education at the private school was ‘free’ and regarded as a benefit. Married employees’ children were allowed to attend the school (School Principal, 2013). Unskilled labour, which was mainly contracted on the migrant labour system, was accommodated in hostels for the duration of their six months on the mining site. They were not allowed to bring their families to Oranjemund. Unmarried permanent employees who were not employed on the production sites of the Mine were accommodated in single accommodation units or small flats, depending on their appointment and benefit structures. The accommodation policy prescribed the types of housing unit an employee was entitled to, according to the number of dependants (PO-AS-04 Accommodation Policy, 2013).

### **6.2.3 Funding and revenue streams**

Through experience and the research, I established that school fees are regarded as one of the main drivers for the existence and expansion of a private school. If the school fees are too high, parents in the market might make an alternative choice. The school fees have to be affordable to be able to attract parents.

Namdeb is regarded as the main revenue stream for the private school. The bulk of the budget from Namdeb to the school goes into the salaries of the teachers. On top of that, the teachers are employed as Namdeb employees, with the related remuneration packages associated with the job description and appointment of each teacher. Currently, this includes monthly salaries, free housing, free water, free electricity and free gas. The teachers are also part of Namdeb’s bonus scheme and often are rewarded bonuses applicable across the Mine.

A private school will not be able to offer the current salaries and benefits for the teachers if the school should de-link completely from the Mine. Even if it de-links from the organisational structures of Namdeb, the school will not be able to survive without the subsidy from the Mine. Parents will have

to be creative in developing revenue streams and be able to maintain them if the school is supposed to survive financially on its own. For this community, it would be a daunting task. Oranjemund is not associated with an agricultural or farming community. The surrounding economies cannot support a private school while they are all dependent on work from the mainstay of the economy in this part of Namibia, namely Namdeb.

The budget for the private school for 2018 was N\$ 30 million. Namdeb paid N\$ 22 million and the parents paid N\$ 8 million to keep the school operational. At the end of 2018, the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) contributed N\$ 120 000 additional funding. This was the biggest amount of money raised by parents at the school since it was established. This highlights the fact that the community's ability to sustain a private school will be challenged if it has to rely on itself. Apart from Namdeb as the main sponsors, there is not a reliable option for securing a reliable income for the school. The GRN is not a viable option for financial assistance, and the parents would not be able to sustain the school financially on their own.

Diversifying the revenue streams of a school might also necessitate setting up smart partnerships with primary and secondary stakeholders. It would, however, be very important to manage the balance of influence, for instance of the parents as primary stakeholders, to maintain the balance of educational value and what the parents may perceive as a fair price to pay for it. Another would be to maintain a healthy relationship between a major sponsor as stakeholder and the school, where the influence of the major sponsor should not interfere with the educational programme of the school (Brewer, 2011:21). A public-private partnerships (PPP) is certainly one of the options to be investigated (Tshabalala, 2014), since the GRN and Namdeb both are currently experiencing financial challenges. The problem may arise with PPP being portrayed as a cost-effective policy solution to increase access to education and the quality of education, which are problems many developing countries are facing. The primary objective of PPP would be to encourage and promote healthy competition for resources between the public and private schools as a means of enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education (Verger *et al.*, 2016).

Private schools outperform public schools in many areas because they have the freedom to alter and adjust to market demands. Parents often make a choice about the school for their children based on whether the school is up to date with the latest developments in teaching techniques and teaching aids. The parents can easily source funding by way of fundraisers and sponsorships for what they want in their children's schools. Public school parents, on the other hand, tend to wait and see what the government system or 'someone else' can donate to the school in the form of the latest

technologies and resources. This cannot only be attributed to a lack of willingness to investigate possibilities for revenue streams, but it could be that, out of ignorance, these parents simply do not have the skills to put in the extra effort for what is needed in education. In many cases (and it could be the majority), parents in public schools simply cannot afford any financial contribution towards their children's education. There are hardly any parents that would not like to contribute, but if they cannot, they simply cannot. The assertion exists that education systems are platforms for interest groups, especially teachers' unions and administrators – groups that are in control of public resources and who redirect policies and regulations in a large part to satisfy their own interests, rather than those of the students (Chubb & Moe, 1991).

#### **6.2.4 Return on investment**

From the literature review, it became clear that parents would like to see a return on investment for their school fees. The moment a school suffers reputational damage, the numbers go down and the parents will make alternative arrangements. The remoteness of Oranjemund, and the apparent lack of exposure has contributed to the decline in learner numbers in the secondary school section of the private school. This, in turn, meant that learner numbers are not sufficient to offer a greater number of subjects, and some subject had to be dropped by the school. The learner-teacher ratio dropped from 1:14 to 1:6.5. This in itself makes the private secondary school phase very costly, and has an influence on the overall school fees for all the parents.

The learner numbers are on the increase in the public school, since there is a perception that the public school is delivering better education than the average public school in Namibia – and it is 'free'. The recent SATS results confirmed this and indicated that the public school is doing well in the regional context. However, the results are still trailing behind the SATS results of the private school.

Yet, where parents are still able to afford to pay private school fees, they select to put their children in the private school. This could be for a number of reasons, but it generally comes down to the fact that the private school appoints only qualified teachers, the teacher-learners ratio is still very low, and the Mine still subsidises the school fees with 70% for Namdeb employees, thus keeping school fees low for the parents. Arguably, this would mean that the parents are experiencing a massive return on investment; the parent pays a third of the costs compared to what it cost the company to offer private school education. Parents are willing to pay their share of the school fees, even it is only a third,

because they realise that, elsewhere, they would not be able to afford private school fees for their children.

#### **6.2.5 Low-fee private schools**

My study correlates with the literature reviewed. I found that, if the private school in Oranjemund is to survive, it needs to be a low-fee private school. For as long as Namdeb is able to sponsor the school financially, it will survive. Fitting in with the solution identified, it makes sense to remain focused on keeping a private primary school option available for parents at an affordable cost. This would be in line with the attraction to and retention of skilled labour for the diamond mining industry and associated sub-contractors in this community.

### **6.3 FINDINGS FROM DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS**

It is important when interpreting the policies of the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) that one must bear in mind the context in which the particular policy was written. Experience with the GRN is essential to understand the reasoning from a central government point of view, while bearing in mind how the policy would be interpreted at the grassroots level and how it would affect the citizens.

#### **6.3.1 Policies of the Government of the Republic of Namibia**

As stipulated in the Statement of the Problem (section 1.4.5.1), the GRN subsidy towards private schools assisted in the creation of spaces for underprivileged learners in private schools. Ten percent of private school learners were supposed to benefit from this subsidy. Unfortunately, the MoEAC made a mistake in the calculations allotting the subsidy to private schools. The MoEAC sent out letters to all private schools declaring the forfeiture of the subsidy to recover the GRN's losses (//Hoeseb, 2017).

The formula used to calculate the cost per child is averaged at N\$ 3 000.00 per learner per trimester. There simply are no private schools with school fees so low that this amount would be suitable to cover all costs per learner supported by GRN aid. In the case of the private school, this means that the subsidy is insufficient. The //Kharas Regional Office calculated the amount per learner at three times the cost, instead of dividing it by three. According to our calculations, the amount of three times

more was fair and covered the basic costs per learner on the GRN subsidy. It left some money for the child to spend on educational and sport tours.

The withdrawal of the GRN subsidy had an immediate impact on the financial responsibilities of the private schools. The private school in Rosh Pinah, for instance, announced the immediate closure of its secondary school section. With the aid of the two mines in Rosh Pinah, the private school was able to assist the Grade 10 and 12 learners to complete their studies and write their final examinations at the end of 2017. One private school in Lüderitz almost closed its doors, were it not for the intervention of local businesses and industries operating in that town. In Oranjemund, the learners who attended the private school supported by the subsidy suddenly had to look for places in the public school.

### 6.3.2 Namdeb education policy

Namdeb's objective with this policy was to govern eligibility and admission requirements that pertained to child care and the education of the children of employees working for the Mine (School Principal, 2013).

The education policy makes provision for learners to be admitted to the private school without any restrictions, provided that the school fees are covered by the parent/guardian. There are two categories of school fees: subsidised school fees for Namdeb employees, and school fees for non-Namdeb employees. The table below illustrates the school fees and how much parents are subsidised.

**Table 3: 2019 Private school fees**

Cost per learner	Namdeb parents	Namdeb subsidy to Namdeb employees	Non-Namdeb parents	Namdeb subsidy to non-Namdeb employees/parents
N\$ 6 217.00	N\$ 1 760.00 (28,3%)	N\$ 4 457.00 (71,7%)	N\$ 3 300.00 (53%)	N\$ 2 917.00 (47%)

Namdeb employees pay about 28% and Namdeb pays about 72% of the cost per learner. All other parents (non-Namdeb employees) pay 53% of the cost per child. It is clear that Namdeb is heavily subsidising private school education in Oranjemund.

The application process for children to be admitted to the private school is straightforward. An application form has to be submitted providing the necessary information. A valid requirement is to establish whether the family is suitably accommodated and under legal supervision. However, there is no provision for married Namdeb employees with children from a previous marriage if the spouse is not a Namdeb employee. Employees in this category currently have to apply to legally adopt such children, while the school fees are regarded as private fees. This takes long and is very frustrating for the parents.

As mentioned earlier, to prevent the practice of ‘dumping’ children with families where there are places in schools, and especially if the main costs are covered by a private company, Namdeb has a few requirements in their policy for learners to qualify for the Namdeb subsidy.

The education policy currently stipulates that Grade 0 is not compulsory. This would need to be changed as a recommendation to Namdeb, since the GRN reintroduced pre-primary education as being compulsory (MoE, 2010). The Final Draft Education Act states the following: ‘primary education’ means the basic education provided from pre-primary level to the last grade of primary education (MoEAC, 2018).

The education policy does not make provision for parents to apply for a discount based on the number of children, as it is argued that all parents are receiving subsidised private school education from Namdeb.

As mentioned in section 4.3, the education policy does not make provision for learners to be screened according to their abilities and the parents’ financial status. There are no entry tests to the private school. The school tests all children arriving from other schools to establish the level of the child’s skills and development in the previous school. The private school management will then place the child in the grade in which the child used to be. In cases where developmental milestones and competencies have not been reached, the private school management would advise the parents to either allow that the child to repeat the previous grade, or the parents would be advised on remedial steps to be taken. Assistance would be needed at home to make sure that the child soon reaches all milestones and is able to perform optimally.



### 6.3.3 Namdeb accommodation policy

Namdeb has drawn up a comprehensive Accommodation Policy that clearly stipulates all conditions related to addressing the need for accommodation, not only for Namdeb employees, but also for non-Namdeb employees (Property Administrator Manager, 2015).

While every care was taken to accommodate Namdeb employees correctly, employees did not always follow the procedures or stipulations set out in the policy. For instance, employees who qualified for accommodation units with four bedrooms based on the size of their families did not use the bedrooms for their children, but rented these rooms out to non-Namdeb employees. This transpired when the staff at the private school followed up on learners' poor performance. The learners would in some cases mention that they sleep on the floor in a corner of the dining room and that they are tired. The additional people in the home would lead to additional noise and stress in the home.

Through the correct channels, these issues could be addressed and corrected. The company annually inspected all accommodation units. The date of these inspections would be announced before the time in order for the employee to arrange that someone would be at home when the Allied Services Team arrived. During these visits to Namdeb employees' houses, there would be no trace of additional people staying in the unit. It is only in cases where the neighbours or the children would report to the school management that these issues were brought to light.

As mentioned in section 1.4.1, the change Namdeb made to its policy to address the abolishment of the migrant labour system offered different challenges. The main concern here was that employees coming from the rural areas in the north of Namibia brought their children to Oranjemund, while the children's mothers were attending to the subsistence farming operations back home. The only school at that stage – the private school – saw an increase in numbers. With the increase in numbers came the increase in socially related issues and learning problems. Children were often not ready for the grade they were supposed to be put in, and the task of the private school's Learner Support Department subsequently increased. The backlog not only concerned academic issues, but also the developmental growth milestones missed by these children. Low muscle tone, low self-esteem, bad hygienic habits, low numerical and linguistic performance and, in many cases, the use of English as a language was non-existent or very poor.

## 6.4 FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS

It was certainly interesting to find how views differ from person to person. The perspective of the receiver of the information was mainly influenced by the receiver's expectations of educational needs. It was clear that the provider of education in this town, in this case Namdeb, had a different view than that of the receiver, which in this case was the parent or child as customers of the education provider. These perspectives focused mainly on the different needs regarding education in town.

### 6.4.1 Namdeb's needs

Taking the run-up to de-linking the private school from Namdeb into consideration, and seeking an education solution for Oranjemund, it should be emphasised that Namdeb was focused on leaving a positive legacy beyond mining in Oranjemund. The focus of this study, however, is on whether it is feasible for a private school to exist independently in this rural setting.

It was recorded that talks with the MoEAC (then MoE) started twenty years ago, in 1998, when Dr West from the Head Office in Windhoek arrived with a delegation from the Regional Office in Keetmanshoop. Namdeb's stance from the beginning was always to be very careful about the future of the private school, and not simply to 'dump it and run' and hand responsibility over to the GRN. The employees were always taken into consideration and how it would affect their lives, and also how it would influence the dynamics of the Mine's workforce, should the employees select to seek employment elsewhere because of the education situation in Oranjemund. The proclamation and subsequent 'opening' of the town, together with twenty years of toiling with the idea of de-linking, created an excellent opportunity for Namdeb to embark on the transformation process.

Namdeb's needs were expressed in their objectives, as follows:

- Quality and accessible basic education solution remains imperative for the attraction and retention of skilled labour to Oranjemund, and Namdeb in particular;
- The education solution to be a key role player in the Namib Circuit;
- Reduction in education-related costs for Namdeb;
- A suitable education strategy for Oranjemund to be aligned with the Regional and National Development Plans for basic education.

It was made clear from the beginning that a private school facility should form part of the education solution.

#### **6.4.2 Needs of the Government of the Republic of Namibia**

Through political pressure from the Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN), the Regional Councillor's Office and politicians in Windhoek, the GRN became involved in planning for a public school in Oranjemund. With town proclamation and the opening of the town to the general public, there was simply no excuse anymore not to commence with the construction of a public school for Oranjemund. The demand for a public school from the lower income groups, and the political pressure from the voters, ensured that the issue of the provision of a public school in this community was raised as a matter of urgency. The focus of the GRN was to provide education for all at no cost to the community of Oranjemund; this led to a drive for access, instead of focusing on the resources and the provision of quality education.

What has been observed so far in Oranjemund is that the GRN started the school without a building. Buildings were provided by the Mine and the GRN paid rent for two years and has since not renewed its rental agreement with Namdeb. The GRN is contributing very little to the upkeep and maintenance of the buildings. Temporary structures were erected by the GRN for four additional classrooms and one additional toilet block. An additional shipping container was provided and is being used as a school library. Resources are limited to GRN standards and any request for financial contributions to the public school by the parents is met with resistance. Parents have the attitude that education is supposed to be free in Namibia and they do not see the need to contribute any further financially or in time to serve on committees. Fundraisers are supported and raffles prove to be a popular source of additional income for the public school.

The public school was initially started as a primary school alone. The need was soon expressed to have a public secondary school, and the current school was upgraded to a junior secondary/combined school. This was done without any further expansion of the infrastructure of the school. The Mine had to evacuate part of the hospital buildings to create additional space for the public school.

Unfortunately, the building of the public school in 2014 was delayed due to charges of corruption surrounding the tender processes involved. This led to a situation where the GRN did not want to spend unnecessarily funding on temporary structures while the case was dragging on. The situation

has led to a lot of confrontation and frustration in the community. The demand for places in the public school is more than what can be supplied in terms of the temporary structures.

### 6.4.3 Community needs

The education model envisaged for the community of Oranjemund is based on the following: A public primary school, a private primary school and a public secondary school.

The need for a public school became evident when Namdeb briefed the lower income employees about the possibility of them purchasing their houses. Employees were shown a mock-up of a payslip and how their pay would be affected if they bought their houses, and told that they would receive an allowance from Namdeb. It became clear that the majority of the workforce would not be able to afford private school fees, despite it being heavily subsidised by Namdeb (employee pays 1/3 while Namdeb subsidises with 2/3). The affected employees indicated that they would either send their children back to where they come from (the different regions in Namibia), or that they would put their children in the public school where education was ‘free’.

An example of a small town offering choices to parents regarding private school education and public education is found in the next town, 95 km north-east from Oranjemund. The private school in Rosh Pinah started out as a private primary school only. The other alternative for education in the town was the only public school, which existed for many years prior to the establishment of the private school. The parents who could afford private school education put their children in the private school, and the numbers grew quite rapidly. The two mines in Rosh Pinah supported the private school financially with the construction of the buildings and teachers’ salaries. As the reputation of the private school as a centre of excellence grew, so did the funding and the learner numbers.

Unfortunately, the economic recess in 2009 caused the two mines to re-think their non-operational costs to survive and they cut the financial contributions to the private school considerably. In the meant time, due to pressure from the private school parents, the private school expanded to a secondary school, since the public school offered education only up to Grade 7 and a platoon<sup>1</sup> system for education to secondary school learners in the afternoons. This was certainly not a situation

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<sup>1</sup> A system adopted by the MoEAC to use the same school buildings for classes to one group of learners (primary school) during the mornings and a different group of learners during the afternoons (secondary school).

conducive to learning where two schools are utilising the same buildings during the day. Against all advice, the parents expanded the private school up to secondary school level.

The MoEAC opened a secondary school in Rosh Pinah in 2016, offering education from Grade 8 to 12, which meant that education in the public schools could be more specialised, especially offering extra classes in the afternoons and a better extramural activities programme, since the teachers were no longer involved in both schools. The private school experienced a decrease in its learner numbers with free secondary education right next door. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the GRN subsidy was suddenly withdrawn from private schools and the private school basically closed its secondary phase overnight. The school principal had to beg the two mines for financial assistance at least until the end of that academic year to allow the Grade 10 and 12 learners to complete their external examinations. At the beginning of 2017, the private school returned to being a private primary school again.

This was an important indication of what the scenario would be like in Oranjemund. Firstly, the private school will experience a significant drop in numbers if the Mine could no longer support it financially and school fees would increase drastically. Secondly, the private school would lose more learners if it were possible for the public school to expand. If the GRN constructed a public school and space was no longer an issue, a significant number of learners from the lower income groups would be enrolled at the public school.

#### **6.4.4 Current economic climate**

A major challenge facing the provision of an education solution for this particular rural community is the general economic situation facing the world and Namibia, but in particular the diamond mining industry, and this situation is linked to the rand-dollar exchange rate. A lack of investment funds for the mining industry, and commodity price fluctuations are contributing to these challenges. The uncertainty and unpredictability of commodity prices are among the biggest challenges dictating mineral exploration, mine development and production, and whether a mine makes a profit or a loss. Bruce Cleaver, CEO of De Beers Group, emphasises the challenges by mentioning the complexities of responsible seabed mining at a water depth of 120 metres, and the extreme variability of geological features when mining the county's land-based operations, which make Namibia the highest cost-per-carat diamond producer in the world (Grynberg, 2017).

Namdeb is finding itself in the worst financial situation since its inception, and this is due to a couple of factors, but mainly due to a) the ore body that needs to be mined with new and innovative technologies and b) the current unfavourable exchange rate with the American dollar. Mining the land-based and off-shore ore body is becoming very expensive, and the sale of diamonds is not increasing the revenue of the company as budgeted. This all leads to the fact that Namdeb is under more pressure to focus on its core business, being mining and producing diamonds, and focusing less on managing a town and all its amenities. This will affect the management of the school in a couple of ways. With the recent voluntary separation packages offered to Namdeb employees, the learner numbers in the private school are expected to drop while numbers in the public school will rise. This means that the private school will have too many teachers, which is costly.

It would thus make sense for Namdeb to keep on supporting the development of the public school by making more space available for expansion. The more space that is available at the public school, the more parents will have a choice regarding their children's schooling. This would lead to a natural attrition of learners from the private school to the public school. The private school will eventually be over-resourced regarding teachers, buildings and facilities.

It would be assumed that the projected learner numbers for the future are based on the current economic situation. If it worsens or Namdeb activates its Mine closure plan, employees might be retrenched and a decrease in learner numbers in both schools could be predicted. Many breadwinners working in Oranjemund could relocate elsewhere and take their children along. There is not a hostel facility available for learners in Oranjemund; learners thus could not remain behind while their parents worked elsewhere.

The lower production of diamonds impacts on employment. The same impact would be felt in the supporting businesses and industries. There are indications that a decline in Namdeb's operational issues would not only have an adverse effect on the economy of the town, but also on the livelihood of the schools, especially the private school. In a survey done by Marie Hoadley, most businesses in Oranjemund indicated that they would survive without Namdeb (Hoadley *et al.*, 2007). The truth is that the sooner Namdeb could relinquish itself of the obligations of managing a town and all its amenities, the responsibility of providing health care and also heavily subsidising education, the better the Mine will be able to show an increase in profits again.

The idea of supporting education, both public and private, largely contributes to attracting people to Oranjemund. The schools could offer better or at least equal education opportunities as offered

elsewhere in Namibia, especially in the major towns. This idea, however, would not be sustainable and may only provide some comfort in the short term. Both schools should work on external and additional revenue streams to complement their educational efforts and to assist in achieving their goals.

## **6.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study provided the Town Transformation Team with a solid foundation to formulate an opinion based on sound research. I could describe the Mine's project as a puzzle. If I take a piece of the puzzle and call it, "A conceptual analysis of the provision of a private school in a Namibian town", it would mean that a piece is missing from the whole town transformation effort.

The study further provided me with insights from other studies, and I could find similarities with what was happening in education in lower income communities elsewhere. Some significant similarities were found by visiting other schools.

Being drawn into the TTT, I accepted this role with vigour, since I thrive on new challenges. It was important that my contribution should assist Namdeb to leave a positive legacy regarding education in Oranjemund. A private school in this town would still act as an attraction and a retention strategy for skilled labour to this remote part of Namibia, and this is exactly where the significance of the study lies. It is vital for the future of not only the diamond mining industry, but all other peripheral business, that the choices regarding education would be an important factor amongst the elements drawing people to Oranjemund, with one of the choices being to offer children private school education.

My analysis of the policy documents indicated how the policies of Namdeb and the MoEAC shaped the way education and the social structure of Oranjemund developed over the years. It is important to note that these policies cannot be regarded as complete, and that they need continuous adjustments to suit the requirements of the Mine and the community as they change.

The study provided me with a deeper insight into the issues related to shaping our current situation and how the future of education in the town should be seen. The study is very pertinent and points out the roles important stakeholders have played in the past, but also points out their significant and important roles in the future.

## 6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations associated with this study go together with some major frustrations. I would define them as follows:

- **Timing:** The timing of this study connected to a project being run at the same time by Namdeb could not have come at a better time. The study fits perfectly and assisted me to provide the Mine with expert advice drawn from my research on whether there is space for private school education or not. On the other hand, my study's timeframes have not synchronised very well with the timelines and milestones of the education solution project and the subsequent de-linking of the private school from Namdeb. To have all these timeframes overlapping and lining up without any major issues is proving to be very challenging.
- **Wide spectrum of stakeholders:** The major stakeholders, like the MoEAC and Namdeb, operate on different levels and their urgency regarding the project varies significantly. For instance, the MoEAC is used to the fact that Namdeb did not leave any stone unturned to assist in providing spaces for the public school to expand over the past four years. It seems at the moment as if the MoEAC is at peace with this arrangement and that there is no urgency in constructing school buildings for the public school or confirming whether there is a clear commitment to purchasing the current private school buildings – or to accept the secondary school as a donation. The GRN machinery is not geared for acceleration.
- **Namdeb, on the other hand, has set timelines and is trying to work within those parameters.** The private school was supposed to be independent of Namdeb by the end of 2018, but Namdeb extended that date to the end of 2019. This was done mainly because the other party is racing through this effort like tortoises stampeding through peanut butter – very slowly.

## 6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I studied the impact of policies on the development of the current situation regarding the provision of private school education in a small town. This included research on low-cost private schools. There are aspects that provide areas for further studies. I would list the most urgent studies as follows:

- **Social impact on a small town when big economic powerhouses withdraw from the immediate community.** I can think of other examples, like the situation in Rosh Pinah in the south of Namibia, Marikana in North West in South Africa, Kombat in the north of Namibia, Uis in the north-western part of Namibia, and Kleinsee in the Northern Cape, to list only a few. It is extremely alarming to see the sudden increase in reported cases of child neglect and abuse here in our small town while the community is still reeling from the sudden changes. The



health, education and social services and local government are ill-prepared to take over the responsibilities that were held by Namdeb for so many years. Even the police are struggling to take over the roles previously provided by Namdeb's Security Department. Incidents of alcohol abuse are reported to be on the increase.

- Another field of further study would be in tailoring a specific education model for this remote town to attract not only skilled labour, but to attract a different citizenry to Oranjemund. We are situated in the middle of Namibia's best mining resources. Subjects related to the mining sector must be tailor-made for this region at school level and tie in with technical tertiary studies to provide skilled labour to the mining sector of Namibia. Unfortunately, the MoEAC cut spending on technical schools and studies. A study in this direction could provide academic insight for the MoEAC to re-invest in technical studies that are in line with the technical needs of the country.

## **6.8 A REFLECTION ON HERMENEUTICS**

My engagement with the academic part of the research was very daunting in the beginning. I felt totally out of place during the first postgraduate days. I did not understand the language in those sessions. Everyone, especially the faculty staff and the young 'career' student, were rambling on and I lost the plot completely. After a discussion with one of the lecturers about 'toning down' the academic language and bearing the 'old toppies' in the back of the class in mind and using more understandable terminology, I was able to join in the conversations. I was later familiar with most of the academic terminology and felt more at home in the later postgraduate sessions.

I experienced a very enlightening moment when one of the deputy principals reporting to me came into my office and told me his experience after looking at a specific situation from a different angle, or through 'a different lens'. I was so proud, because I had tried to explain to him the basics of hermeneutics and how the text could be understood or interpreted in a similar or different way by the receiver of the information and the provider of the information. It was like the 'aha moment' we as teachers are looking for in our lessons.

The understanding of hermeneutics was inspired by my supervisor, and he explained it to me by filling a whole white board with words, lines and arrows. Not experiencing an 'aha moment', I was given the names of researchers like Gadamer so that I could read more about it. It was after my supervisor's further advice to read a fellow Namibian's work on hermeneutics that the penny finally dropped for me.

Since then, I am extremely aware of how I portray a message or receive a message, whether it is in text, verbally or visually. A further point of awareness is in the way we as teachers give feedback to our learners regarding their work and academic progress. How do we understand the work submitted by a learner? Do we actually take the time to really understand what the learner was trying to give back? Do we realise how important that comment is we write in red ink on the learner's work? What is the value of our feedback and how does it contribute to inspiring the learner to improve and do better next time?

The postgraduate days offered to students are very valuable. Outstanding lessons I attended were the library presentation (Mendeley), the writing skills workshop and the presentations about research.

## **6.9 IS THERE SPACE FOR A SUSTAINABLE PRIVATE EDUCATION FACILITY IN A RURAL TOWN LIKE ORANJEMUND?**

The provision of a private school in a Namibian town is regarded as the main aim of this study. The recommendations in this regard thus focus specifically on the provision of a private education facility. The provision of the private school cannot happen in isolation, since it forms part of the education solution the Mine is seeking. The first three headings will deal with the policies that were analysed. The rest of the points are recommendations for the way forward in establishing whether there is a space for a private school in Oranjemund.

### **6.9.1 GRN policies**

It would be very challenging to make recommendations from this study regarding the policies of the MoEAC regarding private school education. There is a Regional Education Forum where all walks of society are represented. This Forum has a mandate from the Minister of Education to make recommendations regarding educational matters. Perhaps through this channel the following recommendations could be put forward for consideration:

- The focus of the subsidy should be on creating additional spaces in private schools, especially in areas where the GRN's provision of educational facilities and infrastructure is insufficient.
- The GRN subsidy and the calculation per learner should be revised. The amount of money made available per learner at a private school must be in line with the basic cost per learner at that particular school (tuition, uniform, textbooks, stationery and the basic needs must be

covered for these learners). The cost must be realistic in terms of the cost of offering basic education per learner.

- The GRN subsidy must contribute to additional staff needed for 10% learners.
- The GRN subsidy must support developments at the school in terms of infrastructure, additional classrooms, toilets, etc.

It is generally argued that the GRN schools are battling to overcome financial constraints. If the GRN needs support from the private sector for education, it needs to contribute significantly in order to make the application of the GRN subsidy lucrative for the governing structures of private schools.

### **6.9.2 Namdeb education policy**

The Namdeb education policy in its current form will have to be adjusted to be in line with the transformation of the town. The primary school of the private school would in all likelihood remain under the governance of Namdeb for as long as the LoM allows it. As indicated in the education solution, the secondary school will be transferred to the MoEAC. It would be important to recommend changes to the policy, bearing the following in mind:

- The objective or purpose of the policy.
- The hermeneutical interpretation of the policy. The policy must be put in text that is easy to understand and to implement. Both the originator of the policy and the employee (receiver of the policy) must be able to interpret and understand the policy in the same manner. Their views and understandings/perceptions must be the same.
- The policy must be in line with the requirements of the future of the town. It must be in line with the town transformation processes.
- The policy must encourage parents to enrol their children in the private school.
- The policy must not place restrictions on admittance to the private school.

The age of learners attending the private primary school needs to be stipulated, as well as the admission age. The application process in its current form is suitable for the current needs. An addition to the application form would be a completed contract between the school and the parent/guardian regarding the payment of the school fees. This contract must cover the issue of non-payment of school fees and clearly stipulate the processes involved in recovering arrears.

The education policy makes no provision for married Namdeb employees with children from a previous marriage where the spouse is not a Namdeb employee. The policy should be adapted so that a marriage certificate is sufficient for registering the child as a member of the family.

The requirements in terms of applications from non-Namdeb employees/parents may remain in place to prevent children from being dumped with families in Oranjemund. Namdeb must reconsider the practice of subsidising children from parents who are not working for the Mine. If this practice is to remain in place, the changes to the policy might include a sliding scale of 'discount' a parent would receive in terms of the scarcity of the parent's skill supporting the diamond production efforts of Namdeb. In other words, sub-contractors with skills important for production could be taken into consideration for a Namdeb education subsidy.

The education policy currently stipulates that Grade 0 is not compulsory. This would need to be changed, since the GRN reintroduced pre-primary education as being compulsory (MoE, 2010). The age for admission and for transfer to the next grade must be added to the policy, especially as the child must pass a school readiness test for admission to Grade 1 at the private school.

The education policy must make provision for an academic entry test. There currently are no entry tests that allow a child to be entered into the private school. All new arrivals need to be tested to establish the level of the learners' skills and development in the previous school. The private school management will then place the learner in the grade recommended by the previous school. In cases where developmental milestones and competencies have not been reached, the private school management may advise the parents to either allow the child to repeat the previous grade, or the parents would be advised about remedial steps to be taken. Assistance would be needed at home to make sure that the child soon reaches all milestones and is able to perform at optimal levels.

### **6.9.3 Namdeb accommodation policy**

The Namdeb policy in its current form will be dealt with and changed according to the benefits and entitlement status of the employees. The Mine is currently proposing to sell properties to the employees. This would effectively mean that employees who are parents with children at the private school would own private properties. The school has no jurisdiction over private matters in terms of the type of housing they can afford or are entitled to. Some Namdeb employees may select to stay on under current conditions, which means that they will receive a housing allowance from Namdeb.

They are allowed to apply for accommodation from the Mine or from another property owner. The school will have no jurisdiction over the private affairs of employees who are parents.

The private school will deal with all matters related to the learners' domestic issues as stipulated in the Education Act. Regular contact and referrals to the relevant Ministries protecting the rights of children will be maintained.

#### **6.9.4 Education solution for Oranjemund**

I asked whether there would be a place for a private school in Oranjemund. In accordance with the TTT's proposal for an education solution that is being put forward for the future of this town, it is possible to provide a private primary school to this community. It is very important to bear in mind that a private primary school will only survive in this small rural town with the assistance of a main sponsor like Namdeb in the form of a subsidy.

During the discussions with the MoEAC, they made it clear that special arrangements regarding the subsidising of private schools are out of the question, since the policy in this regard has changed. Semi-private schools exist and are mainly funded by the GRN. These are the church schools and a few schools in the Walvis Bay area regarded as previous Model C schools.

Efforts will be made by Namdeb to financially contribute to education (all schools) in town to make sure that the delivery of education serves as an attraction and retention for skilled labour and investors. A semi-private secondary school is not seen as sustainable, since the future of the Mine is not secured. It was suggested that the MoEAC funds the secondary school and Namdeb contributes financially where they can. The MoEAC is supposed to take over the ownership and governance of secondary school education in Oranjemund.

In a surprising change of events, the MoEAC suddenly showed an interest in purchasing the private school buildings. This would put a different spin on the de-linking process and dealing with the transformation process of education in town. It could mean that there is a distinct possibility for the existence of a private school on a smaller scale. Unfortunately, the timeframes required to transform the secondary school before the end of 2019 are very close and tight. To assist the MoEAC to establish the public secondary school, Namdeb is mandated to donate the secondary school section of the

private school to the GRN. It is trusted that this will speed up the process of nationalising secondary education in Oranjemund by the end of 2019.

The total learner capacity of Oranjemund is almost one thousand seven hundred learners. The total number of learners in the private school and the public school for 2019 stands at about one thousand learners.

#### **6.9.5 Key factors in providing a private school in this community**

It was mentioned earlier that the majority of private schools that opened after the Independence of Namibia in 1990 were initiated by parents wishing to provide quality education for their children as close to home as possible. Private schools cannot exist without the involvement of parents. This means that parents must be in contact with their child's school almost daily. They must be the driving force behind fundraisers, which will ensure lower school fees, but also increase the learning experience of their children.

Primary education starts at home, with manners, attitudes and hygiene, to mention a few, and parents cannot simply drop the child off regard their secondary education as the school's problem. This is where the feedback and interaction from the parents are needed. Parents are needed on different levels in the school – academic involvement, and the governance of the school (setting rules, codes of conduct, contracts of employment, recruitment of staff, etc.).

A private school needs to be self-sustainable and must survive on its own budget. It is very reassuring to know that a big company stands behind the school, but if the financial support is suddenly taken away, the school must still be able to survive on its own financially and continue delivering quality education. A private school in Oranjemund would need enough learners and parents who are able to sustain the financial costs associated with a private school. The GRN might soon not be in a position to assist the private school with a subsidy due to their own financial difficulties.

Parents and the local businesses sponsoring or subsidising schooling or events at the private school must have the reassurance that there will be a return on their investment. Parents would be paying for a service and, in this case, for the education of their children, and therefore would expect an above average education and performance linked to it. Sponsors donating money or companies assisting the private school in paying for school fees would at least like to see the school performing better in all

spheres, and not only academically. Company and sponsor brands are associated with the school's academic performance and the extramural activities on and off the school grounds. A sense of pride must set in when money is spent as a donation or sponsorship and a sports team plays well or, even better, when the school's manners are being complimented as a true reflection that the finer things in education are also being achieved.

I would strongly suggest that an agreement be drawn up with the main sponsor of the private school (Namdeb) in which the return on investment in terms of Namdeb's brand is specified. Namdeb, being the sponsor, must be associated with the school's good reputation. This would include a vast number of requirements that need to be very visible and also less visible, but that underwrite quality education and good governance. The private school management needs to be accountable in some way for the implementation of measurable goals that are in line with the main sponsor's ethos. A practical example would be, for instance, while the learners from the private school are travelling on a bus, sponsored by Namdeb with all the logos on the back of the bus and litter is been thrown out the windows.

#### **6.9.6 Provision of a private school**

I argue that in the provisioning of a private school for a rural town in Namibia it is crucial that the parents initiate this and that it is driven from the need of providing quality education to this community. If parents could be convinced to get involved with the establishment of a private school, the following important considerations are regarded as important:

- The current Life of Mine (LoM). How long would Namdeb still be able to support the private school?
- GRN/MoEAC capacity in terms of finances and resources. Would the private school be eligible for a GRN subsidy in the future again?
- Curriculum reform and the subsequent introduction thereof. How much would the introduction of different subjects and additional staff cost?
- Responsible exit strategy for Namdeb, leaving behind a positive legacy. Would the private school sustain itself beyond diamond production in the future?
- Namdeb carrying currently two thirds of the costs, since there is no GRN subsidy available. How long is this model going to survive?

The neighbouring town of Rosh Pinah provided me with data regarding the survival of a private school in a similar setting like Oranjemund. The private school in Rosh Pinah was initiated and supported by the mines operating in the area. Unfortunately, funding dried up as economic and production challenges increased. Together with the withdrawal of the GRN subsidy, the closure of the secondary section in the private school was eminent. Teachers' contracts were terminated. Learner numbers decreased with the escalating in school fees, which again saw a further reduction in learner numbers.

I argue that it would be in the best interest of the mining sector to financially support all educational efforts in the community (private and public). It is important that the parents are getting involved in the education of their children especially regarding fundraising efforts. Parents must take over the governing responsibilities of the private school in order to provide it with its own identity. The private school has managed an excellent reputation over a period of many years. It should be easy to maintain this with the support of Namdeb.

#### **6.9.7 Parents initiate a private school**

From the previous section, some questions that need to be asked are: Are there enough parents able to sustain a private school? Would the parents be able to fund the private school independently from Namdeb or other sponsors? Would Namdeb still contribute towards the funding of a private school facility? To be able to answer these questions, perhaps a further question: Who manages private schools and how are they funded? In Oranjemund's case, the answer to this question would determine the existence of a private school in this rural setting.

In Namibia, private schools generally were started by churches doing missionary work in the colonial era of Namibia's history. Government aided schools were introduced to the rest of the population and only after the Independence of Namibia from South Africa in 1990, private schools were started and registered by groups of parents seeking alternative education for their children.

The private school in Oranjemund, as indicated in the historical introduction of this study, was perhaps the only school in Namibia initiated by a private company and was thus seen as a private school. This scene had to change taking the recent transformation of the town in consideration and we will hopefully see parents ceasing the opportunity to start and register a private school in town.



This will effectively mean that the private school would be seen as a truly private entity, funded either by school fees alone, or assisted by a company who would like to support it by philanthropic contributions financially or in kind. The parents of the private school, if they would select to do so, would have to come up with very innovative ideas in planning for alternative revenue streams to fund a private school.

The MoEAC's interest in the purchase of the private school's buildings, sparked some hope for funding to build a fit-for-purpose small private primary school on a different site. Either way, I would recommend that the parents focus on private primary school education and maintain the existing relationship with Namdeb in terms of funding.

#### **6.9.8 Establish an independent school board**

A properly constituted and functioning school board independent from Namdeb policy and procedures, as well as budgeting would be one of the critical issues to address. The future of the private school would lie in the hands of the parents and Namdeb. The future of this school depends on the way it would be assisted in transforming and eventually be transferred into complete private ownership. This would entail that parents take ownership of policies (entry requirements, teacher qualifications, etc.), procedures and its own budget (remunerations, school fees, learner numbers, staffing norms, etc.).

In a transitional phase, it would be required that the parents slowly are drawn in to take responsibility of funding the school. Namdeb will have to assist with some of the revenue streams for a transitional period. Once parents have taken over the responsibility of drawing up a budget for the school, together with the governing structures and registration of the school at the MoEAC, the school will be regarded as a private entity. The parents must be assisted to develop into such a position that they draw up the necessary budget and enter into negotiations, together with the school's management, for the financial needs for that particular year. I would argue that once this happens, parents and Namdeb would have a direct line of communication in terms of establishing and assuring the future sustainability of the needed revenue streams. This is leading to the next point below.

#### **6.9.9 Develop diversified revenue streams**

It was mentioned earlier in Chapter Three, that a public school and a private school would compete further for revenue streams to assist with funding their extra-mural activities. It would suit the education solution in Oranjemund very well if the private and public school would compete on a healthy basis for students and resources, which would act as key drivers of educational change and excellence (Verger *et al.*, 2016).

This would be a contributing factor for achieving a very positive spin-off regarding the education solution; good schools with a track record of education excellence and good results will act as a retention and attraction factor not only for skilled labour to Oranjemund, but also attracting a citizenry to this remote area which will assist in developing the town as a fully-fledged independent entity away from the mining operations of Namdeb. One cannot argue that the town, schools and all amenities would not be dependent on the related diamond mining activities. The dependence on the mining industry would always play a significant role in the financial and equity diversification in this area. The other sectors like tourism and private businesses supporting the mining industry would grow and equally support the normal developments and town functions in Oranjemund, but this will happen over a period of time.

With the looming closure of the Mine and the Life of Mine (LoM) increasingly shrinking from 2030 to 2020, the offering of a choice as an alternative to parents for school education is becoming more urgent than earlier expected. To keep the momentum of the citizens and stabilising and settling in after all the changes, it is very important to provide the town with a certain and definitive choice for their children's education.

In Oranjemund's case, both schools will compete for the same resources, especially for additional funding. One could argue that the public school would receive a guaranteed income from the GRN, but it is a known fact that the Namibian Government is in a recession and struggling to increase a sufficient budget for the education budget. I would suppose that the Mine would support the private school with a subsidy to be able to offer an upmarket education to parents who would need it for their children. I would recommend that the parents and the school management develop a suitable diverse revenue stream to support the basic and peripheral needs of the school. I would further recommend that the school prioritise the basic needs in terms of educational costs and work their way through proper investigation and budgeting to develop an affordable school fee proposal. The financial assistance from Namdeb, together with the additional revenue streams through fundraisers, would play a key role in determining the school fees and the attraction of parents wanting to enrol their children for private school education.

#### **6.9.10 Consider a low-fee private school**

I recommend that the option of a low-fee private school be investigated. Keeping the above arguments and recommendations in mind, a low-fee private primary school would be the ideal concept for Oranjemund. It would especially offer places to learners from parents who are willing to contribute to their children's education, but just cannot afford the full costs associated with private school education. Subsidised school fees would bring the cost to the parents down. Parents' contributions elsewhere for instance with the maintenance of the buildings, vehicles, cleaning of the buildings and garden can also bring costs down further.

The current Robust Mining Plan announced recently would assist in the starting-up of such a low-fee private school but then the school should be limited to primary school education only. The learner numbers will determine the number of teachers needed. In secondary education, it becomes more expensive, because teacher numbers are driven by the number of subjects offered and this comes at a higher cost to the parents.

If Namdeb would survive for a couple of years more and would be able to assist financially with the school's budget, the foundations could be laid and enough confidence can be instilled into the parents to govern their own private school. This would give rise to creative ways in sourcing additional revenue streams to take the private school beyond Namdeb.

#### **6.9.11 The private school brand and confidence in the secondary school**

Brand management has become a significant part of many, if not all, private schools in terms of establishing their relevance and their place in a community. Before I make a recommendation in this regard, I need to explain the background of how the management of the private school's brand would be challenging.

For a vast number of years, actually from the inception of the private school in Oranjemund, the school developed and maintained a very high degree of educational excellence. The school provided tuition only up to Grade 7 but diversified the curriculum to such an extent that the private school was able to prepare its learners for both Namibian and South African secondary schools. The private school's excellent reputation opened the doors for many learners to enter secondary schools in Windhoek or Cape Town. The Gr 7 learners were recruited through recruitment visits and

presentations in Oranjemund by the most prestigious schools in Windhoek, Cape Town and the Boland areas. These schools would include Karibib Private School, St Georges and St Pauls Private Schools in Windhoek, GRN schools like Delta High School, Windhoek High School and Windhoek Technical School. In Cape Town and the Boland area, schools like Paarl Boys High, Paarl Gymnasium, Laborie, La Rochelle Girls High School, Worcester Gymnasium and Worcester Technical High School, Stellenbosch High School, Paul Roos Gymnasium, Rhenish Girls High School, Somerset College, Wynberg Boys High School, Wynberg Girls High School, St Cyprians and Bishops. This certainly is an impressive list of schools which formed the basis of choice for the Oranjemund parents.

With commencing the secondary school as an extension to the private school, the question was asked whether the school could offer the same education for its learners as these schools mentioned above could or not. The demand, however, at that stage was two-fold; the Mine was in a position where it was looking at every possibility to save on non-production costs and the parents wanted their children closer to home and not attending high schools while being at boarding school.

Parents, who wanted to explore alternative education options for their children outside Oranjemund, could still do so and enrolled their children at schools of their choice at their own costs. The Mine did not support transport and hostel fees anymore like it did before there was a high school in Oranjemund.

This in one way, forced the low-income parents to have their children enrolled in the secondary school at the private school and therefor limited their choice of secondary education options for their children. On the other hand, parents from the higher income brackets could afford sending their children to schools outside Oranjemund.

The extreme limitation offered to parents since the inception of the secondary phase at the private school, proved to be a good choice, albeit the only one, since the private school did extremely well in the first ever external Grade 10 examination. This achievement was celebrated at length and the school ranked very high amongst established schools with excellent reputations of educational excellence. This fact led to the secondary school management believing that the secondary school was on the right track regarding its standards and started preparing the learners for the first ever Grade 12 external examination.

The Grade 12 results of 2013 was a total disaster. Many learners failed key subjects for admittance to tertiary studies. The parents, the community and the staff were completely shocked at this outcome and it caused a huge upset amongst the parents. These poor results were totally unexpected. Programmes were drawn up to intervene and establish what went wrong. Educational experts were consulted and an academic audit was done. These finding assisted the private school management to realign the focus of the teachers and the learners. This resulted in much better results in the following year's external examination.

Yet, the impact of the poor results on the reputation of the secondary phase at the private school was so severe that parents lost confidence in the ability of the teaching staff in assisting in good performances of their children. It became very evident that the private school could not offer what the schools outside Oranjemund could offer.

It took several years of hard work and introspections that made school management realise that there are a couple of truths the private school need to face. They were amongst others; the school does not have an entry-level examination. The intake of learners is compulsory since the employees are working for Namdeb. Placement is automatic, provided there is space and that there are no major problems related to age, disabilities or the child's behaviour. Schools outside Oranjemund selected the best performers while the poor performers 'disappeared' in the system without the private school staff knowing what happened to these learners once they left town. Another factor is that the private school was operating as a "new" school when it started the secondary phase. It took some time for the learners and staff to settle in to develop a productive work ethics and ethos. This came very slowly, but everyone, and is in fact, still developing.

Exposing the secondary phase learners to the broader curriculum came at a price; if the staff wanted the children to experience any high school related educational matters somewhere else, it involved travelling and costs. The private school's secondary school learners cannot participate in any sport league matches. The school mainly compete on friendly winter sport or summer sport days against other schools. The teams have to travel for all regional and national competitions and trials. This usually means a couple of days out of school, sleeping over, which comes at a cost for travelling, accommodation, meals and allowances for the accompanying staff.

It would be fairly advantageous for any school to make sure that its reputation is protected and that there is a lot of work going into the brand management of the school. Conducting their study, a school principal's remark to Verger *et al.* (2016) summarises this very well: "To be honest, there is so much

good word-of-mouth, because our student population come by itself”. I understand this as that a school should be operating in such a way that it advertises itself. I would argue that by way of providing an excellent service to the parents, the school would sell itself to prospective parents.

One of the points of contention is the annual ranking of the school in the national external examinations. The Mine management feels that the school should be under the top 10 performers in Namibia. The private school management would be over the moon if that would be the case, but it is not possible. The simple reason for this is that every parent wishing to put his child in the private school is allowed to do so. There are no real admission criteria for a child to enter the private school. The school has had a long-standing vision of developing each child to his/her unique optimal potential. The private school further does this with whatever resources are available. It happens that technology for instance, gets outdated, but because the Mine is suffering financially and the school is not seen as important for production, the school often had to take budget cuts in the past. This resulted that the ‘nice-to-have’ teaching aids like the upgrade of the computers laboratory or iPads, were always put off for the years when there would be a better economic environment.

The private schools in Windhoek and elsewhere in Namibia each follows their own admission criteria and therefor achieve good national rankings. They attract and select the best performing learners from other feeder schools. To be able to attract suitable learners and to exclude the “difficult” learners is easier for private schools, since they are not falling directly under the governance of the MoEAC. Private schools may not discriminate against any child wishing to enter the school, but when some selection criteria exist at this school, it is easier to demonstrate that learning, discipline and safety are taken seriously. This could be a “selling” point to market the school against the “free” education available at the government school.

A tendency that developed over a number of years is for schools to send a number of teachers at the end of every year to act as national markers. The perceived advantage here is that the teacher would know how to teach so that the learners can obtain better marks and the schools achieve better national rankings. This certainly leaves many challenging questions regarding the effectiveness of teaching the syllabi per subject instead of coaching the learners “how to answer” the question papers. The learners do not necessarily understand the work and work with the subject content or make it their own. The learners battle to explain and use the learning content, but they are “trained” how to answer the questions, “should the question look like this...”, then answer it like that. The downside of this practice is seen with the drop-out rate of learners at tertiary level. It could be counterproductive when

looking at the main aims of teaching and educating learners at a school, but the chasing of better rankings can lead to some of these un-pedagogical practices.

In Oranjemund the argument can easily be levelled that the public school is the “lesser” offer against the “better” offer at the private school regarding education. There is, however, the tendency lately of parents who can afford it, to still take their children out of the private school for enrolment in perceived better options elsewhere in the north of Namibia, Windhoek, Cape Town or schools in the Boland area. It seems that parents are “escaping” a bad choice presented in Oranjemund, although there is a choice between a public or a private school. This drives the argument that the private school is still suffering the consequences of the poor results of individual learners and the subsequent low rankings. The reputational damage is that the perception is that the private school is not performing well. This obscures the fact that the private school does not have a selection criterion and admits all Namdeb employees’ children, regardless their educational background, disciplinary issues and learning obstacles.

As mentioned in the beginning of this point, the above elaborate background about how difficult it is to maintain a positive brand for the school, was necessary so that I could make a recommendation in this regard. Since the recommendation is that the private school focus mainly in pre-primary and primary school education, I would recommend that strategies be developed in the following basic areas to improve on the reputation of the school:

- The selection criteria for admission to the school must be done in the best interest of the learner. If a learner is not ready or fit for mainstream education and the school is not able to accommodate the learner, the parents need to be referred to another school.
- Determine the potential of each learner and work out an academic and if necessary, a remedial intervention strategy for those who need it.
- Teaching objectives must be clearly understood by every staff member.
- Macro-, meso- and micro planning is crucial and must be monitored regularly.
- Feedback to the learners in terms of the way written work is marked must be evaluated.
- Reports and feedback to the parents in terms of the learner’s performance must always be a true reflection of the learner’s ability.

When the basic things in a class are done properly, good performances and results will be the order of the day and the school’s brand and reputation will stay intact. Teaching techniques and the inclusion of the latest technologies are important to be developed in line with the latest global trends.

Care must be taken not to lose focus on the “aha-moment” during each lesson and that learning is not taking place.

#### **6.9.12 GRN to expand in education**

This point has nothing to do with the research question, but the point plays a significant role in establishing a public secondary school facility for this community. The private primary school learners would feed into this public secondary school and it would be crucial that this secondary school be successful in order to gain the trust of the parents to keep their children in Oranjemund. The current public school is currently a combined school offering education from pre-primary until Gr 11. It would thus be recommended to split the current combined public school for the sake of smoother governance structures, resources and administrative challenges facing combined schools. That is to say whether the MoEAC takes a firm decision on expanding the public school which will mean the recruitment of more GRN teachers. The offer from Namdeb to donate the private school's secondary section to the MoEAC is on the table for consideration.

The current private secondary school is situated in the eastern side of the private school campus. Further internal classroom moves would ensure that the public secondary school would have enough space, should the secondary school be taken over by the MoEAC. The increase in learner numbers would not have an immediate effect in the current private school staff, since the teacher-learner ration at the private school is very low at 1:10.

The transformation process of the school is linked to timelines outside my control due to the different stakeholders. The current slow progress would assist the expansion of the public school and the coinciding shrinking of the private school to happen naturally. This expansion and shrinking must happen at the same time and would leave the private primary school space in the middle of the school campus.

My recommendation through the appropriate channels to Namdeb would be to engage on senior management level with the MoEAC and the GRN about the Namdeb Board's proposed donation of the private secondary school section to the MoEAC. I would further recommend that the public secondary school be further supported by Namdeb in order to assist in their delivery of quality education. This will ensure that the private school learners will have a good secondary education



facility right next door and the parents would not be required to send their children away or pay expensive school fees anymore.

#### **6.9.13 Parents are offered a choice between schools**

Parents previously had no choice other than putting their children in the private school, whether they could afford their (subsidised) school fees or not. With the recent developments with the normalisation of the town and the subsequent offer to purchase properties in Oranjemund, parents could face an extra financial liability. With the choices for primary school education, there would be a choice for parents to exercise.

I would recommend that the following choices be considered and encouraged for this community:

- Kindergarten/Day-care/crèches or early childhood education.
- Private primary school education from Grade 0 - 7.
- Public primary school education from Grade 0 - 7.
- Public secondary school education from Grade 8 - 11.
- Public higher-level secondary education for Grade 12.

#### **6.9.14 Oranjemund Private School staff contracts and termination process**

Namdeb is undergoing a restructuring programme in terms of a robust mining plan to overcome the current financial climate. The CEO of Namdeb Holding commented in July 2018 as follows: *History has shown that we are a resilient organisation capable of turning adversity into opportunities. The new 3-year Robust Business Plan presents us with an opportunity to evaluate where we are and to create value for Namdeb, our shareholders and stakeholders. We need to foster unity of purpose and support each other. It is time to embrace change and be the vanguards of a new Namdeb by doing the right things today for a better tomorrow.*

Rightsizing or downsizing in a mining context is perhaps lesser of a disruption in the production of diamonds, but is certainly a different situation with the education programme at a school. As part of the downsizing project, staff members at the private school were included in a voluntary separation (VS) exercise during the last trimester of 2018. This meant that teaching positions not necessary at the private school anymore (due to no interest in subject choices or a major reduction in learner numbers), was declared redundant.

The private primary school would need teachers until such day the Mine decides it cannot continue supporting the school anymore. The staff could still be employed by the new governing body. Staff wishing to apply for vacancies at the public school would be allowed to do so. The MoEAC agreed in principle that teachers residing in Oranjemund would have an advantage when considered for vacancies at the public school. These teachers are already in town; there are no relocation costs involved or in some cases, accommodation is already sorted out.

I would recommend that the staff be informed timeously about their future employment at the private school. This must be done once the terminology for the termination process has been cleared and it must be done during the first trimester of 2019. Since the termination of the staff has been briefed in 2018, the staff needs to know urgently what the forward would be for the remainder of 2019.

#### **6.9.15 Roadmap and way forward**

Further and continued negotiations with MoEAC is going to have to continue and the speed at which things are happening must be increased. If the LoM is such a critical issue, I would recommend that the MoEAC should be coached into taking over the responsibility of secondary education as soon as possible. The secondary school needs stability and needs time to build on the old private school reputation and develop its own brand. The sooner the secondary school settles into the new teaching norms, its own culture and identity, the better for the academic programmes and results. While the building of the GRN school is still stalled, moving into the current private secondary school buildings makes logical sense. I recommend that the buildings be prepared for total occupation by the MoEAC by the end of 2019. The old private school music block needs to be transformed into administration offices and a fence to be erected between the public secondary school and the private primary school.

The majority of the parents will welcome the offer of free secondary education in this town. At least, there would be a choice of education on primary school level. With the Mine and the rest of the business community's involvement through donations and sponsorships, there will be no excuse to deliver education at a lesser level as currently is the case.

Namdeb plans to transfer the private school secondary phase at the end of 2019. If all negotiations are concluded, the current public secondary section should move in to combine with private school secondary learners to form a new public secondary school for the town.

The private school's primary school and pre-primary school will continue to exist, as they used to be known in the past, unless parents decide to register a private school, take over the governance and responsibility from Namdeb, and manage the private school as an independent entity. When the private school shrinks to such an extent (and the public school increases simultaneously), the private primary school should move to smaller premises so that the public primary school can expand in the current private primary school buildings.

## **6.10 CONCLUSION**

This study provided me with a foundation for leading arguments and providing advice to Namdeb in dealing with the education solution it is seeking and the subsequent de-linking of the private school. It seems at present that only the secondary school will de-link from Namdeb and that the primary section will be retained as a private school. I am excited about that. If it were not for this development, the entire private school might have been lost to this community. With Namdeb's subsidy, the private primary school will survive as long as Namdeb can stretch its life-of-mine projections. There is thus space for a private school.

My experience was that I could speak with authority on the topic with all key stakeholders, including the MoEAC. The literature study made me aware of the connection with other African states regarding education. It provided me with a wider understanding of where the relevant policies originated from and what their initial purpose was. Unfortunately, the individual interpretation of the policy governing the subsidies for private schools, and the subsequent miscalculation of the fees, had an extremely negative outcome on private schools in the whole of Namibia with the sudden withdrawal of funding from the MoEAC.

The value of hermeneutics should not be underestimated in making sense of research being conducted. It not only assisted me in disseminating the data and literature, but provided me with a platform to listen carefully, read thoroughly and communicate clearly with everyone involved in the study.

The future of the private school in Oranjemund will depend on the future of the current businesses and the future economic developments in this remote part of Namibia. This would include not only the expansion of the mining sector from focusing only on the mining of diamonds, but also prospecting and mining for other minerals. Alternative energy generation, such as solar and wind energy, would contribute significantly in creating much-needed jobs in this area. The expansion and

inclusion of the areas that were forbidden to enter in the past, namely the Sperrgebiet area, could now be opened up for tourism in the newly established Tsau //kaeb National Park. The important link to the rest of Namibia, with the newly completed tar road between Oranjemund and Rosh Pinah, is certainly welcomed in this remote area, but the GRN must now realise the significance of spending capital on the development of the roads and infrastructure in the western parts of Namibia. This will greatly benefit these remote areas, especially when taken into consideration that, with the possibility of opening the border post between Oranjemund and Alexander Bay for twenty-four hours, this link between Namibia and South Africa could mean a major and welcome boost to the economies of remote areas like Oranjemund, Rosh Pinah, Aus, Lüderitz, Helmeringhausen and Solitaire, and eventually linking these areas to Walvis Bay and Swakopmund.

Roman Grynberg (2017:58) describes an idyllic world in this remote part of Namibia:

When you read the descriptions by past residents of their life in Oranjemund, the centre of diamond production by De Beers in southern Namibia, they invariably paint an idyllic picture of life very much based on the high standards that long years of diamond mining activity has permitted. It is the sort of town where Oryx walk, completely unperturbed by the human presence in the main streets of the town and graze freely on the relatively abundant grass.

The manicured golf course on the edge of the desert and the prosperity are all part of a world of which most of Namibia can only dream. At Oranjemund services like housing, electricity and water were provided to its residents gratis from De Beers, the schools were excellent and one could go to bed with the doors wide open.

It is well understood that Namdeb's long-term goal is to mine diamonds until the end of 2050. This would mean that the town would cease to be the economic centre of the diamond industry in Namibia. In its efforts to focus on its core activity, the mining and production of diamonds, Namdeb is assisting the local authority to develop Oranjemund into an independent town. The development of alternatives to diamond mining activities will greatly assist with the expressed need for a private school in the town.

The risk is that if changes are not made timeously, this area might suffer economically and will not be able to attract citizens for this 'new' town in Namibia, but will miss out on further expansions and developments in the mining and tourism industries. The sustainability of a private school will rely heavily on these expansions. The off-shore mining of diamonds done by DEBMARINE Namibia is certainly welcomed by the economy of Namibia, but these activities do not contribute significantly

to Oranjemund. DEBMARINE makes use of the Oranjemund Airport because a large portion of the labour force is employed on a fly-in-fly-out basis. These employees do not spend their disposable income in Oranjemund, but in the communities from which they come.

The demographics of Oranjemund seems to be heavily influenced by the mining activities and the associated recruitment process. The population ranged between 4 000 and 10 000 over a number of years. Employment opportunities at Namdeb and the subcontractors and businesses supporting the mining activities rise and shrink as the production and sale of diamonds rise and shrink. It would be assumed that the population will settle once the town is 'open' to the general public and entrance to the town is no longer restricted by permits. The challenge would be to coordinate the development of businesses independent of Namdeb operations. This would mean a focus on the exploration and mining of other minerals, tourism, small-scale farming and agricultural projects along the lower Orange River would need to be established and gain momentum as the land-based operations of Namdeb decrease. These changes would be a major challenge for any developing sector in the above-mentioned areas; the need for customers and people supporting these developments would be crucial in the infancy stages. It would, however, not be possible to start up alone, and support would be needed from Namdeb or the GRN to grow. Namdeb will find itself in the role of custodian of all these developments for as long as Namdeb is associated with being the sole/key role player in the economy of Oranjemund.

Chapter 3 clearly pointed out the importance of not measuring the quality of education by the number of learners having access to education and the developmental achievement at a cognitive, numerical and linguistic level. The private school would have to focus on its vision for education, which is *to provide an enriched and varied educational programme for optimum and unique child development.*

Both schools in the rural setting of Oranjemund will have to play their part in attracting and retaining community members to make this town more sustainable. It needs to become the town of choice for employees. Unfortunately, the public school will have to abide by government policy and guidelines for enrolling learners, while the private school will have more freedom to apply stricter entry requirements for enrolment, although these must still be in line with the education act.

It is common sense that, for a school to be successful, it needs to be able to impart to students some basic levels of learning. Schooling that does not confer even the most basic numeracy and literacy skills in six years of formal full-time enrolment cannot be considered as being of 'reasonable quality' by anyone. It is important that any school fulfils the basic role of imparting basic skills to learners

during this time and makes sure that the most basic skills are mastered. The focus should thus not be only on covering the basic skills, but the goals for education should be the acquisition of critical thinking and higher order reasoning skills. Namibia is one of the countries where the development of higher order thinking skills is barely achieved (bear in mind that this finding is for up to Grade 6 level).

It is important to take the above into consideration when drawing up policies related to learners' access to a school, and the application of and planning for syllabus implementation (Spaull & Taylor, 2012). I would further argue that the recruitment policies for teaching staff should be adjusted by insisting that suitably qualified teachers teach in the specialised levels, especially in the foundation phases. Spaull and Taylor (2012:4) put it very clearly: "Schooling that does not improve cognitive outcomes are of limited value: it does not expand the range of possibilities available to children or yield national economic benefit."

It is important that a school develops learners to be able to lead a meaningful existence after school, and possibly even pursue tertiary training. It is remarkable that the private school in Oranjemund has been contributing significantly to a citizenry with higher cognitive reasoning skills. There are ex-learners from the private school who returned to be employed on different levels in this small society as skilled or unskilled labour. This covers a vast range of careers in the mining sector (tradesmen, artisans, planners, mining and civil engineers, metallurgists and accountants), education (teachers, secretaries and accountants), environmentalists (mining, nature conservationists), banking (tellers and personal financial advisors) and medical (medical doctors, nursing staff, secretarial and financial services). With the development of Oranjemund as a town, the municipal services are also employing some of the former learners from this school on various levels. Subcontractors supporting the mining activities are also employing former learners.

I am excited that the community of Oranjemund is developing into a self-sustainable society in this regard; both schools – private and public – are taking in the children of these former learners. For many years, this society was excluded from having grandparents in town. Every employee retiring from Namdeb in the past was required to leave the town and settle elsewhere or to return to his or her town of origin. With town transformation and normalisation, this 'circle of life' can be completed by giving families this opportunity to be completed in this rural setting.

Prof Davids of Stellenbosch University asked a very poignant question during one of the postgraduate days: *"Are you aware that you are busy with social engineering in that town?"* The TTT certainly is

aware of the scope of the work, but the complexities around all facets are proving to be quite a challenge. The consultancy group called *freedthinkers* involved specialists in every possible sphere of the project.

My experience in dealing with the different expectations of all stakeholders is that they vary vastly. This is mainly because of each stakeholder's perspective regarding the desired outcomes and how these would affect them, especially where emotional issues are involved and finances play a key role. Different stakeholders would hang on to their beliefs or ideas and would be very reluctant to let go or try to understand the mutual benefit or the opposing argument. The project manager responsible for the town transformation and I developed a safe attitude that I can describe as, "Let the water flow where it wants to flow. This will guide us in the right direction".

This attitude saved us a lot of time and frustration. For instance, the community's needs will prescribe the desired outcomes we need to achieve. If there is a requirement for a private school, clear and transparent communication needs to be provided in as far as what it would entail. The community is warming up to the idea of having at least a choice in the education of their children. If it is not financially possible for the parents, they would select the public school. My experience is that, if the parents would have been told bluntly that they had to move their children to the public school, there would have been a lot of resistance initially.

One of the challenges faced at the moment is the paternal role Namdeb (CDM) has played for many years. The community of Oranjemund was for many years used to there being a very rich company that is paying for everything and that would provide in all needs associated with the town. To wean the community from this mentality will involve a major paradigm shift to achieve. I have observed the anxiety and apprehensiveness with the opening of the town to the rest of Namibia with the cancellation of the permit system. People were expecting hundreds of job seekers to overrun the town and that shanty towns would mushroom on the outskirts of the town. So far, this has not happened and, for as long as the newly established local authority keeps its finger on developments in this regard, this will not happen overnight.

On the other hand, community members are embracing this new idea and entrepreneurs are registering for services such as small gardening, repair and construction businesses. The community is slowly getting used to the idea of paying for utilities and repairs to their homes. The pending home ownership would vastly contribute to the community settling down and staying in Oranjemund for longer. This

can be compared to a past in which the community was fairly dynamic in the sense that the employees arrived and left as the demand for labour changed.

Lastly, but not least – I can explain this study as an excellent opportunity for anyone who would like to do something similar. The reason why I compare it with a journey is that the end goal was clear and I needed to decide how I was going to get there. The route was unknown and the means of travel a riddle. After my initial visit with Prof van Wyk, I decided that it was a journey I would like to undertake. There were many turn-offs along the way, detours from which I had to make a turnaround, along with some cul de sacs. Some roads were clearly marked in neon lights or small LEDs, but led to limited or blocked roads. Sometimes I had to retrace my steps to find a better turn-off, or I arrived at a boulder blocking the way or a bridge that no longer existed. With perseverance and support from my family, my supervisor, the project team and the private school staff, I was able to find the right path.

I trust that this study will provide a map for someone else who would like to conduct a similar study, and that it indicates all the necessary roads to follow to reach the goal.

I can describe this journey as extremely pleasant and memorable.



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## **APPENDICES**

REC Letter



UNIVERSITEIT  
STELLENBOSCH  
UNIVERSITY

## NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC: SBER - Initial Application Form

11 June 2019

Project number: 6446

Project Title: A conceptual analysis of the provision of a private school in a Namibian town

Dear Mr Reyno Nieuwoudt

Your REC: SBER - Initial Application Form submitted on 1 May 2019 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Humanities.

Please note the following for your approved submission:

### Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
11 June 2019	10 June 2022

### GENERAL COMMENTS:

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

**If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.**

Please use your SU project number (6446) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

### FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

### Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Default	Special Brief - OPS Staff Movements Announcement	02/02/2017	1
Research Protocol/Proposal	Nieuwoudt research proposal 2019-01-15 DESC	15/01/2019	2
Default	Nieuwoudt research proposal 2019-01-15 DESC	15/01/2019	3
Default	2019-01-15 COVER LETTER REC CHANGES REQUESTED	15/01/2019	1
Default	Permission to use statistical data of public schools located in Rosh Pinah and Oranjemund as reference materials in a Masters Degree of Education studies	20/02/2019	1
Default	2019-03-06 COVER LETTER REC CONCERNS ADDRESSED	06/03/2019	2
Default	Namdeb Permission to make use of data	06/03/2019	1

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at [cgraham@sun.ac.za](mailto:cgraham@sun.ac.za).

Sincerely,

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

*National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.*

*The Research Ethics Committee: Humanities complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.*

## **Protection of Human Research Participants**

Some of the general responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

**1. Conducting the Research.** You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

**2. Participant Enrollment.** You may not recruit or enroll participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

**3. Informed Consent.** You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

**4. Continuing Review.** The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period**. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is your responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur**. If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrollment, and contact the REC office immediately.

**5. Amendments and Changes.** If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You **may not initiate** any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The **only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

**6. Adverse or Unanticipated Events.** Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouche within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the REC's requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

**7. Research Record Keeping.** You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC

**8. Provision of Counselling or emergency support.** When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

**9. Final reports.** When you have completed (no further participant enrollment, interactions or interventions) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

**10. On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits.** If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.